United States Patent [19]

Brigham et al.

[11] 3,735,923

[45] May 29, 1973

[54] LOOPED TRAFFIC ACCESSORY

[75] Inventors: **Emerson W. Brigham,** Hermosa Beach; **Harvey W. La Branche,** Palos Verdes Peninsula; **Alan W. B. Nash,** Torrance; **Howard F. Newman,** Los Angeles; **Thomas E. See,** Huntington Beach; **Marjorie Ann M. Smith,** Gardena; **Arthur S. Woodward,** Sylmar, all of Calif.

[73] Assignee: **Mattel, Inc.,** Hawthorne, Calif.

[22] Filed: **Aug. 13, 1970**

[21] Appl. No.: **63,589**

Related U.S. Application Data

[62] Division of Ser. No. 785,135, Dec. 19, 1968, abandoned.

[52] **U.S. Cl.** .....**238/10 E,** 104/55

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63h 19/36**

[58] **Field of Search** .....104/55, 60; 238/10 E, 10 F; 46/43, 1 K

[56] **References Cited**

UNITED STATES PATENTS

3,411,783	11/1968	Montagna	104/55
3,480,210	11/1966	Perrinjaquet	238/10 E
1,431,398	10/1922	Hetener	104/55
1,725,536	8/1929	Marx	104/55

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

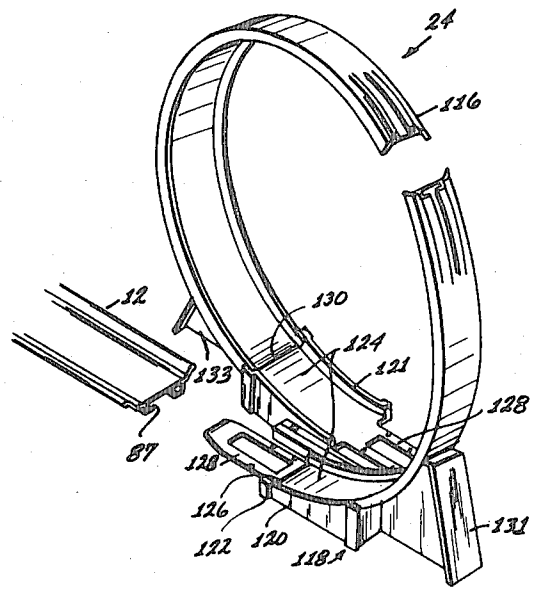
Mattel Toy Catalog, Received March 14, 1968, "Hot Wheels," pages 4–10.

Primary Examiner—Gerald M. Forlenza
Assistant Examiner—Richard A. Bertsch
Attorney—Seymour A. Scholnick

[57] ABSTRACT

A flexible track for toy vehicles has one end connected to a bracket on a C clamp, the clamp being engaged with an elevated support so the track droops to the floor below. Accessory means in the form of starting gates, loops, ski jumps, banked curves, finish gates, and track mergers may be connected to the track to interact with toy vehicles.

2 Claims, 31 Drawing Figures



Patented May 29, 1973 3,735,923

9 Sheets-Sheet 1

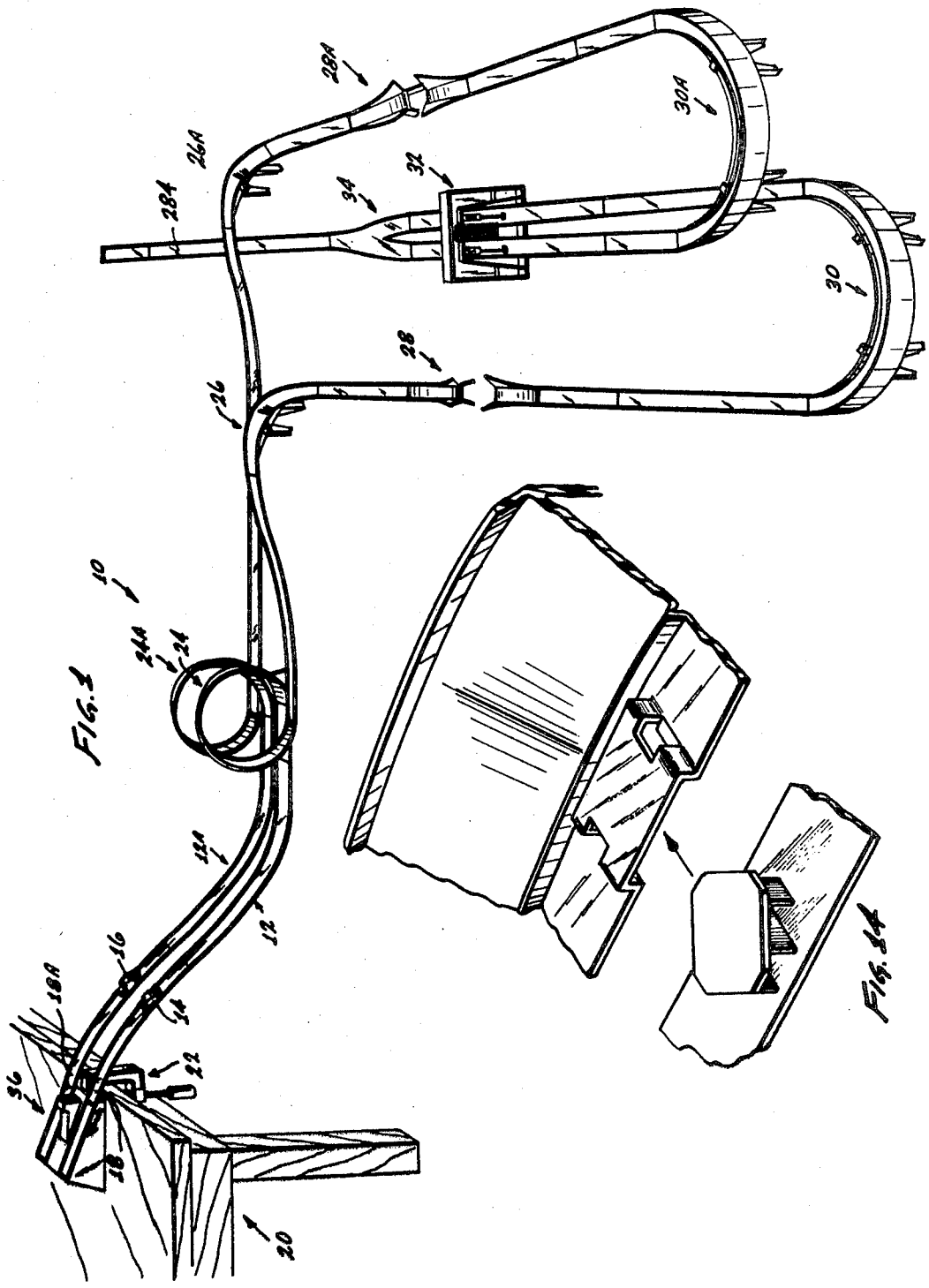


FIG. 1

FIG. 1A

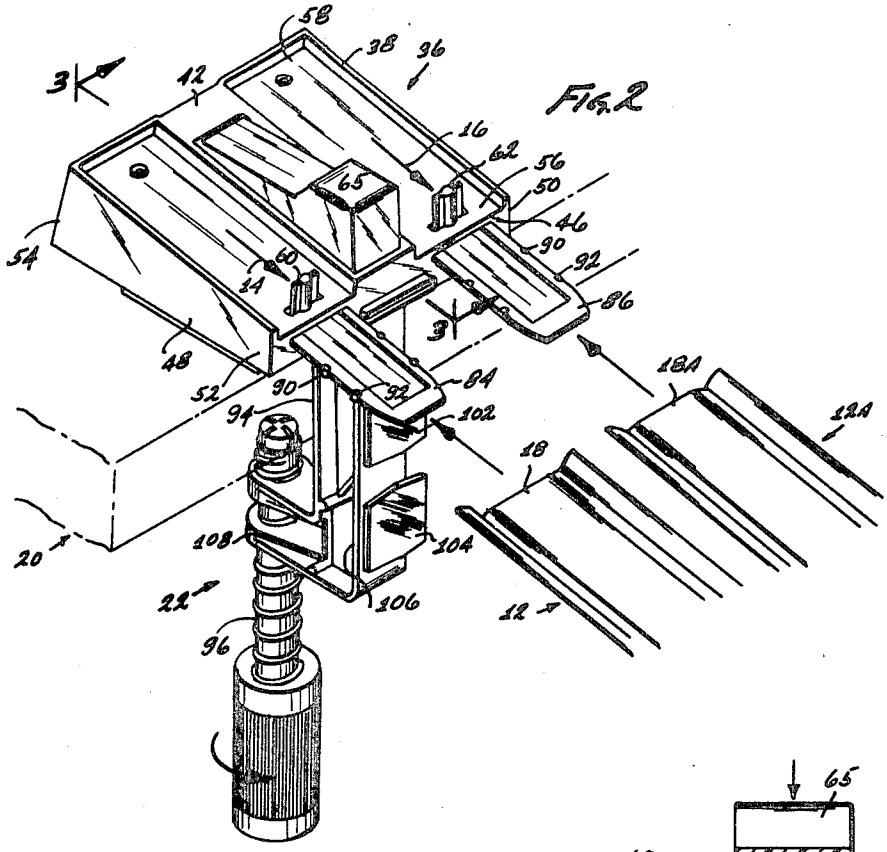


Fig. 2

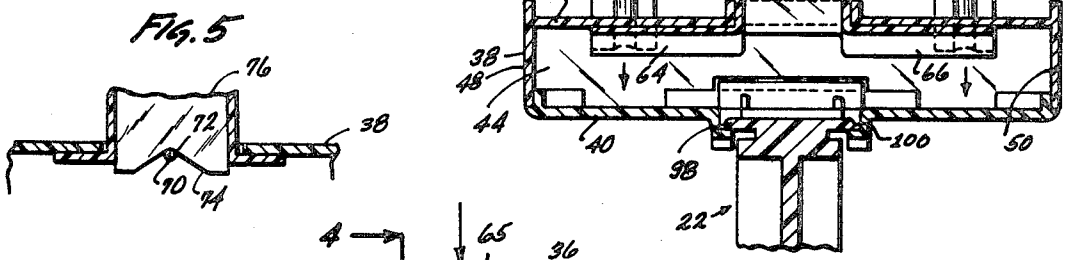


Fig. 4

Fig. 5

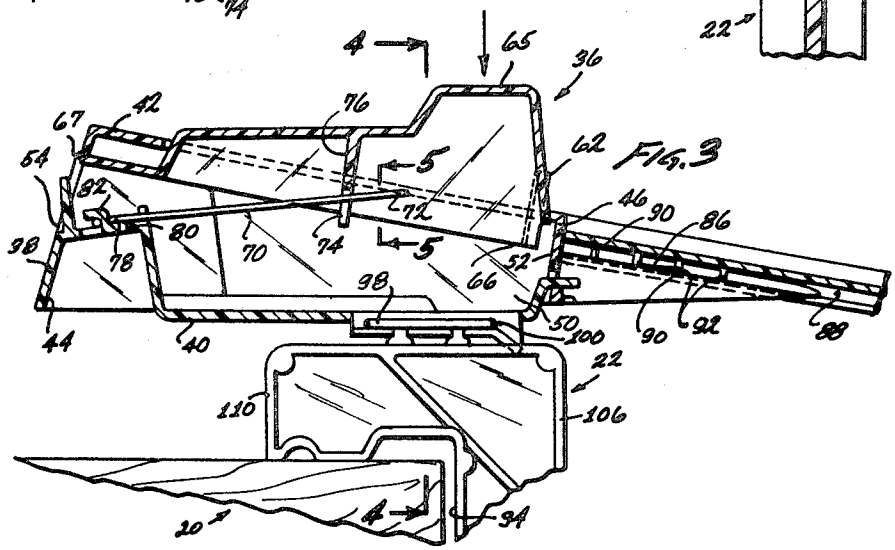
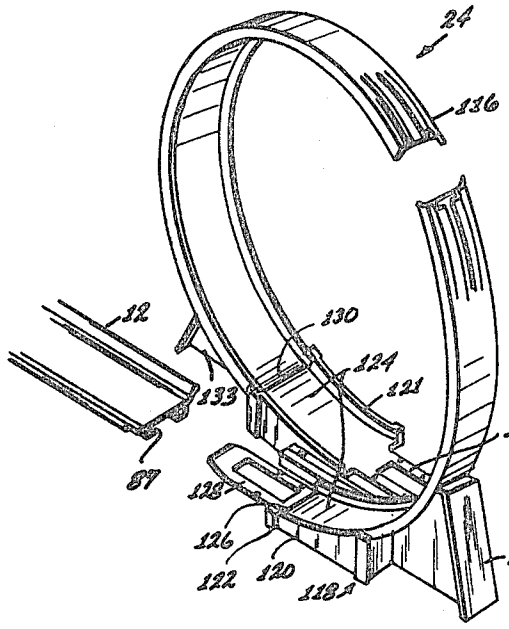


Fig. 3

Fig. 6



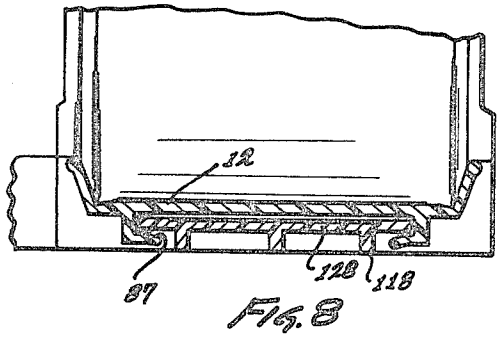


Fig. 8

Fig. 7

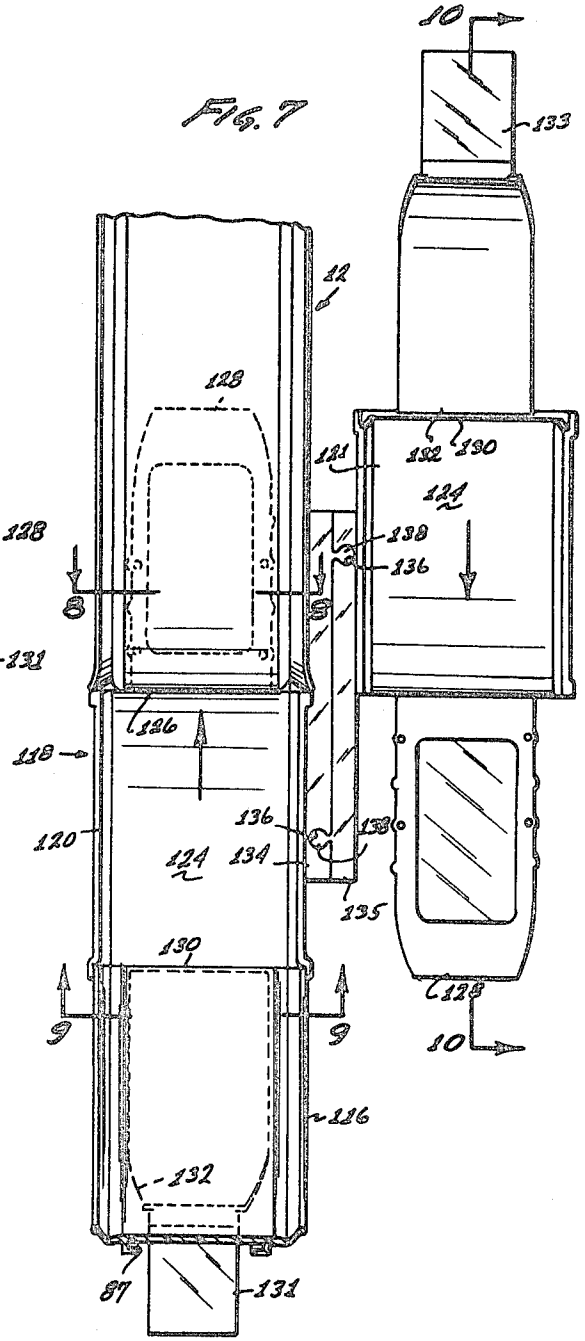
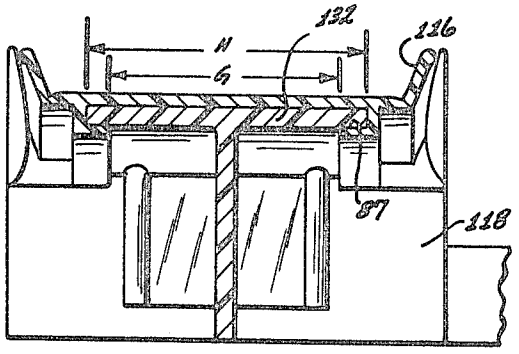


Fig. 9



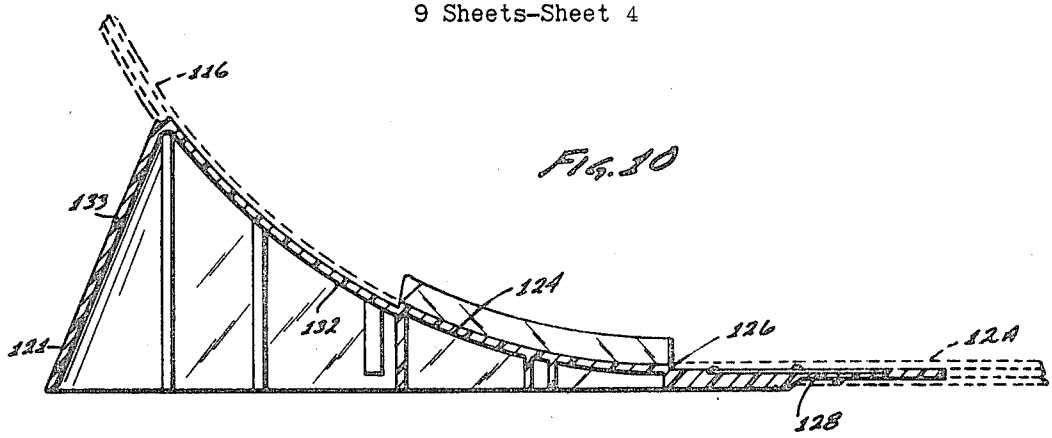


Fig. 10

Fig. 11

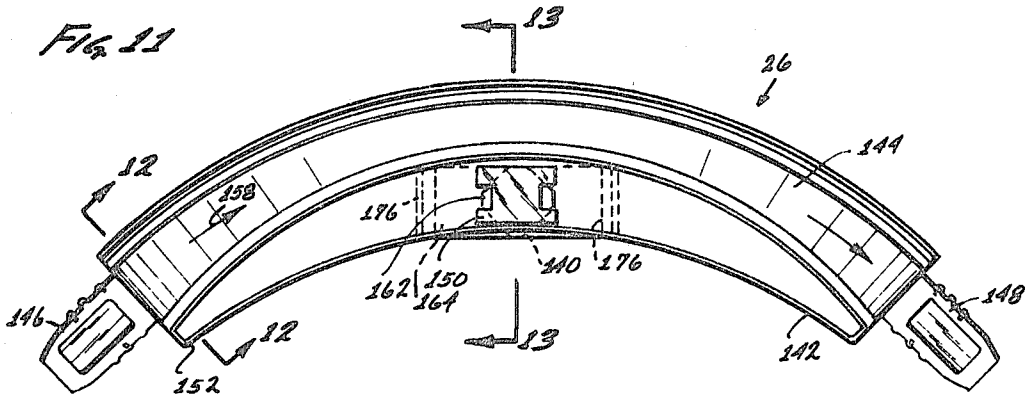
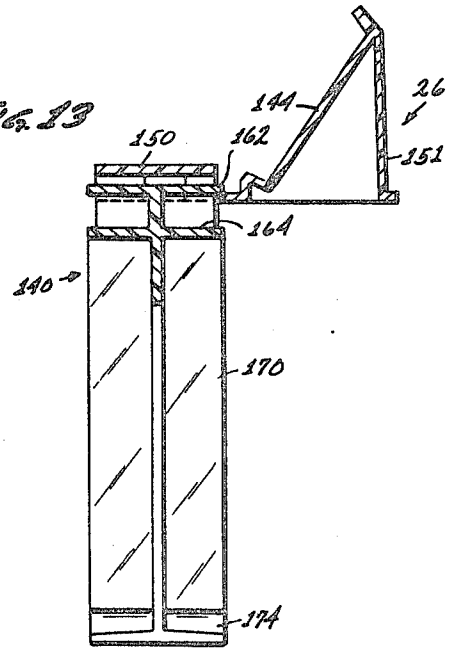


Fig. 13



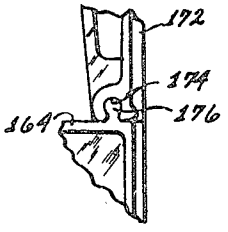


Fig. 18

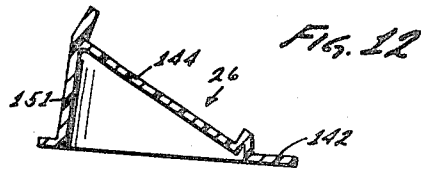


Fig. 12

Fig. 15

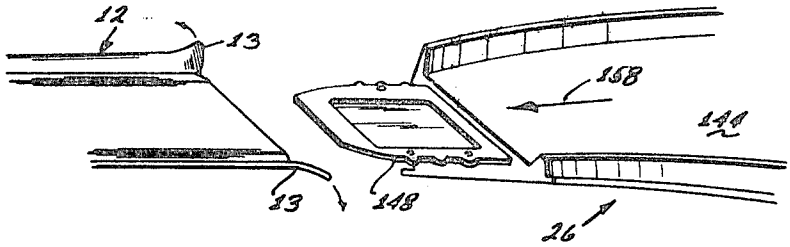
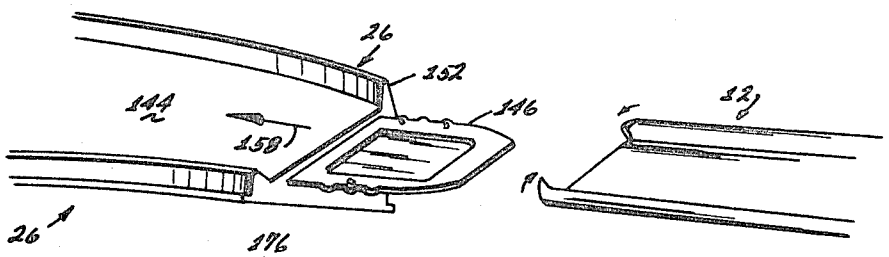


Fig. 16



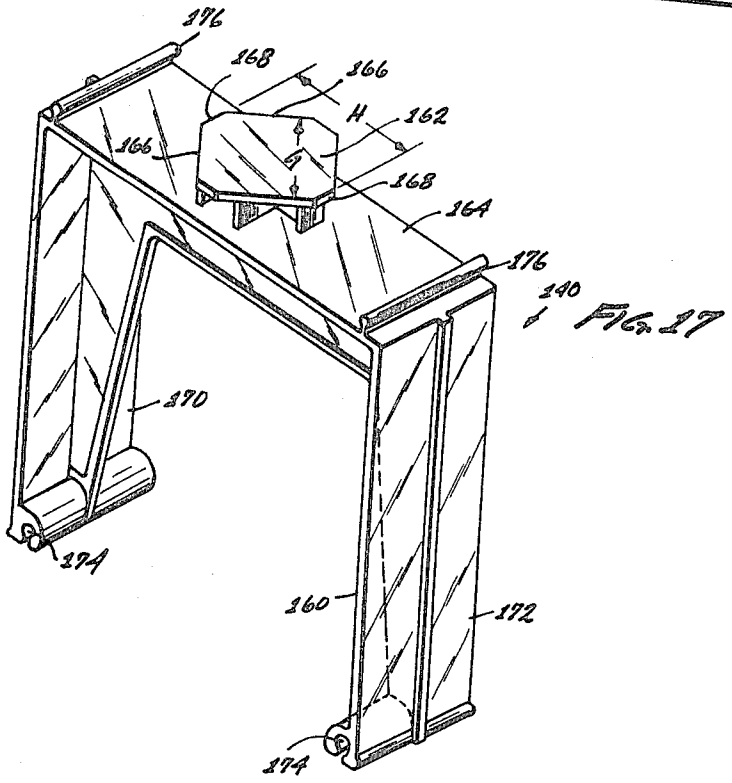
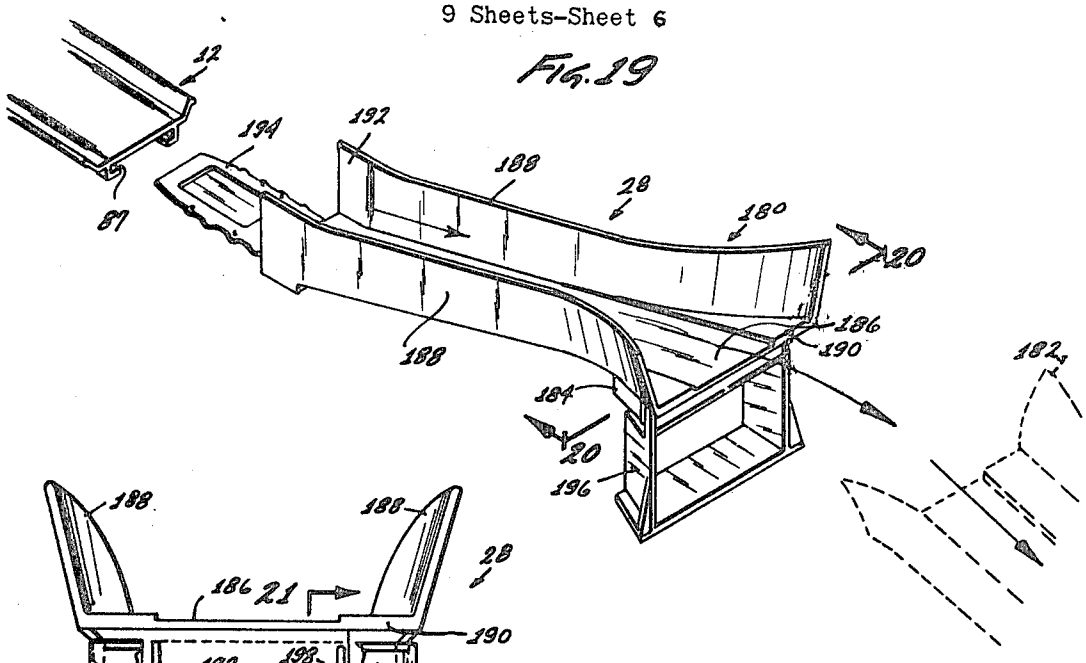


Fig. 17

Fig. 19



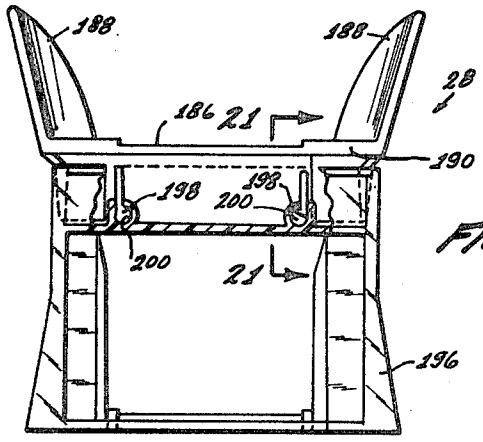
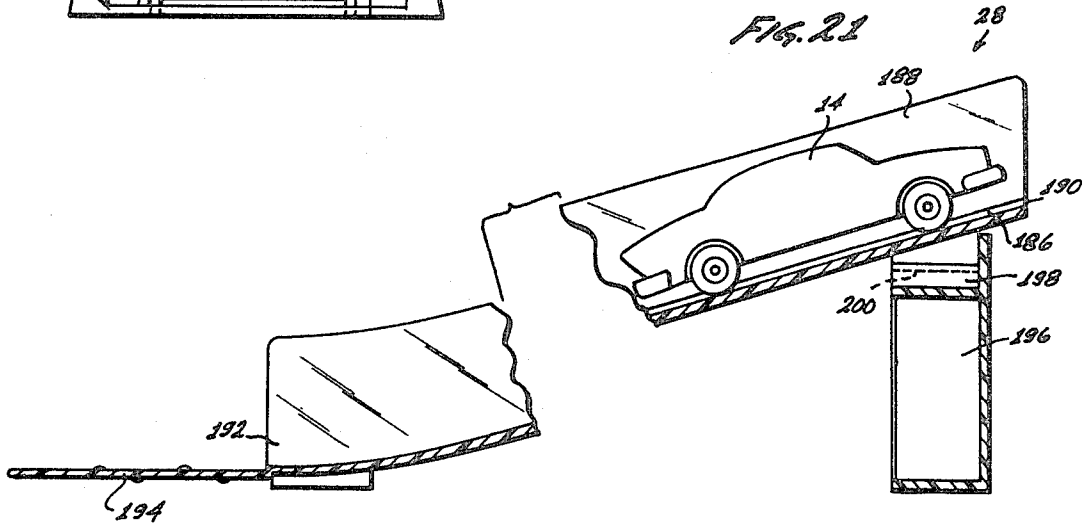


Fig. 20

Fig. 21



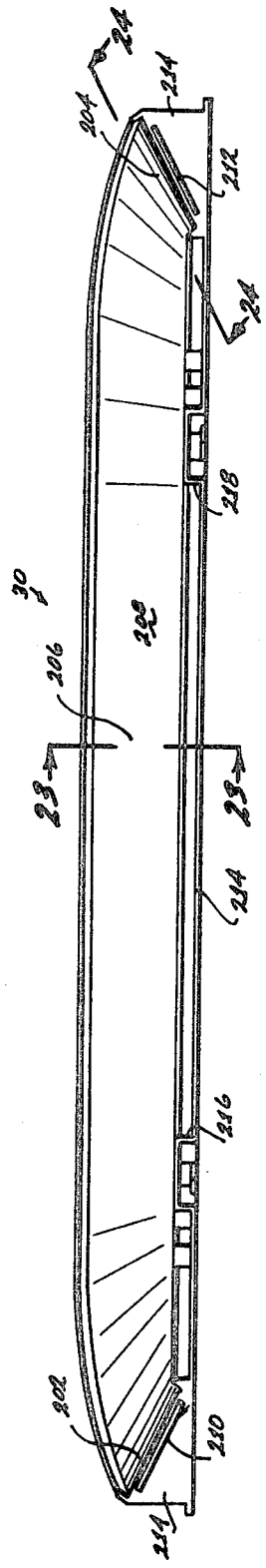


FIG. 22

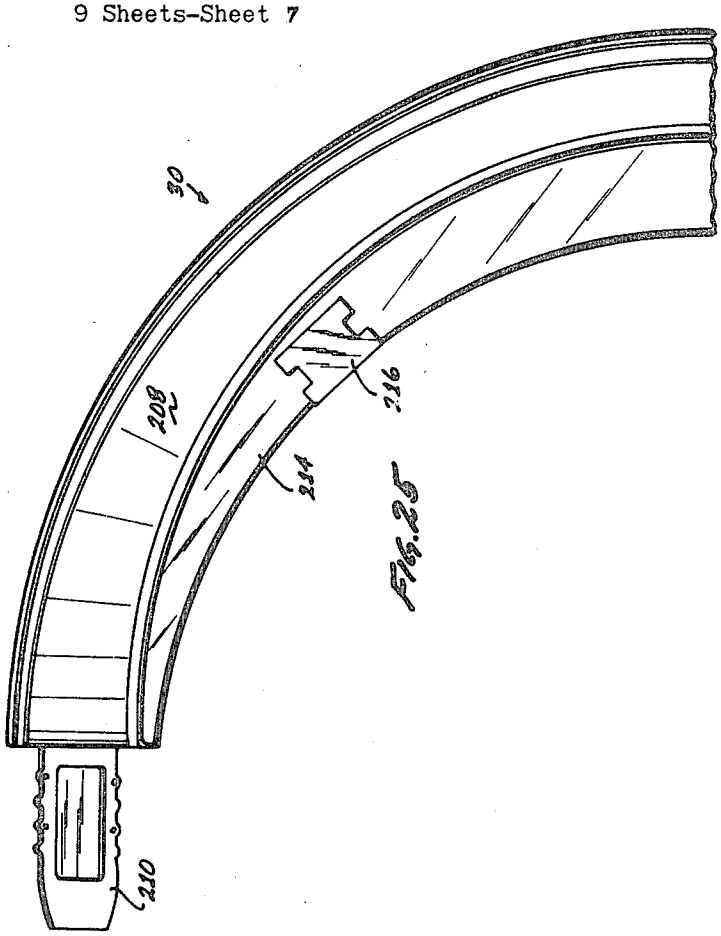


FIG. 25

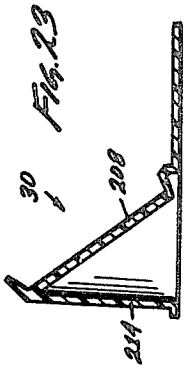


FIG. 23

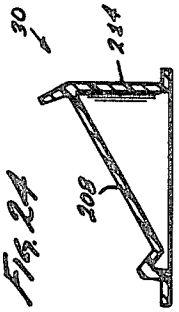


FIG. 24

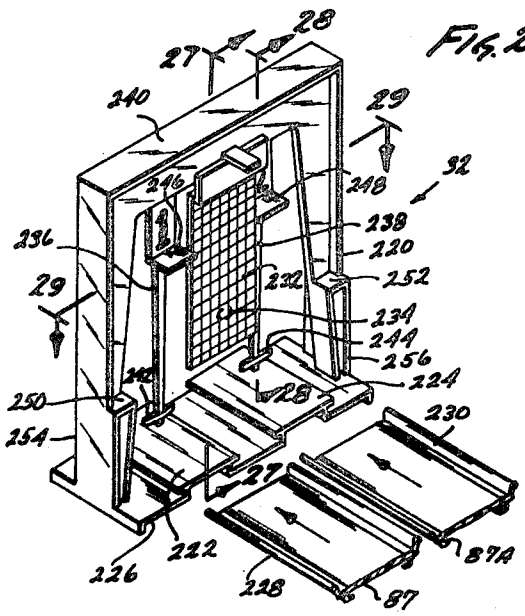


Fig. 26

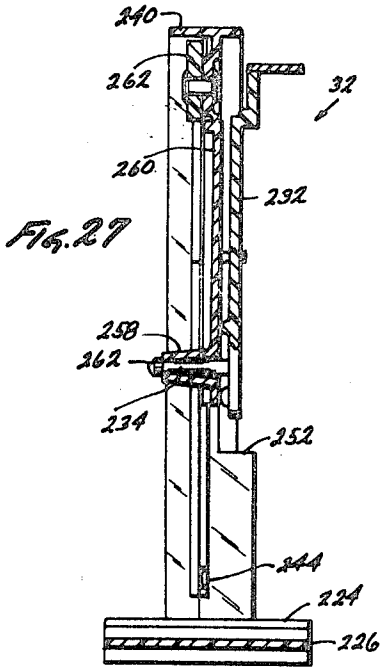


Fig. 27

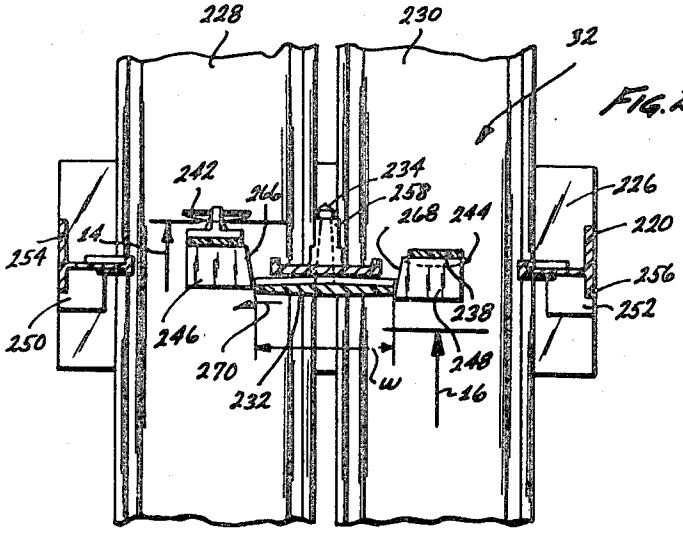


Fig. 29

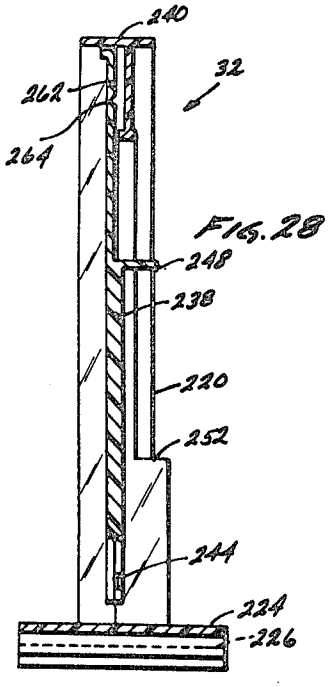
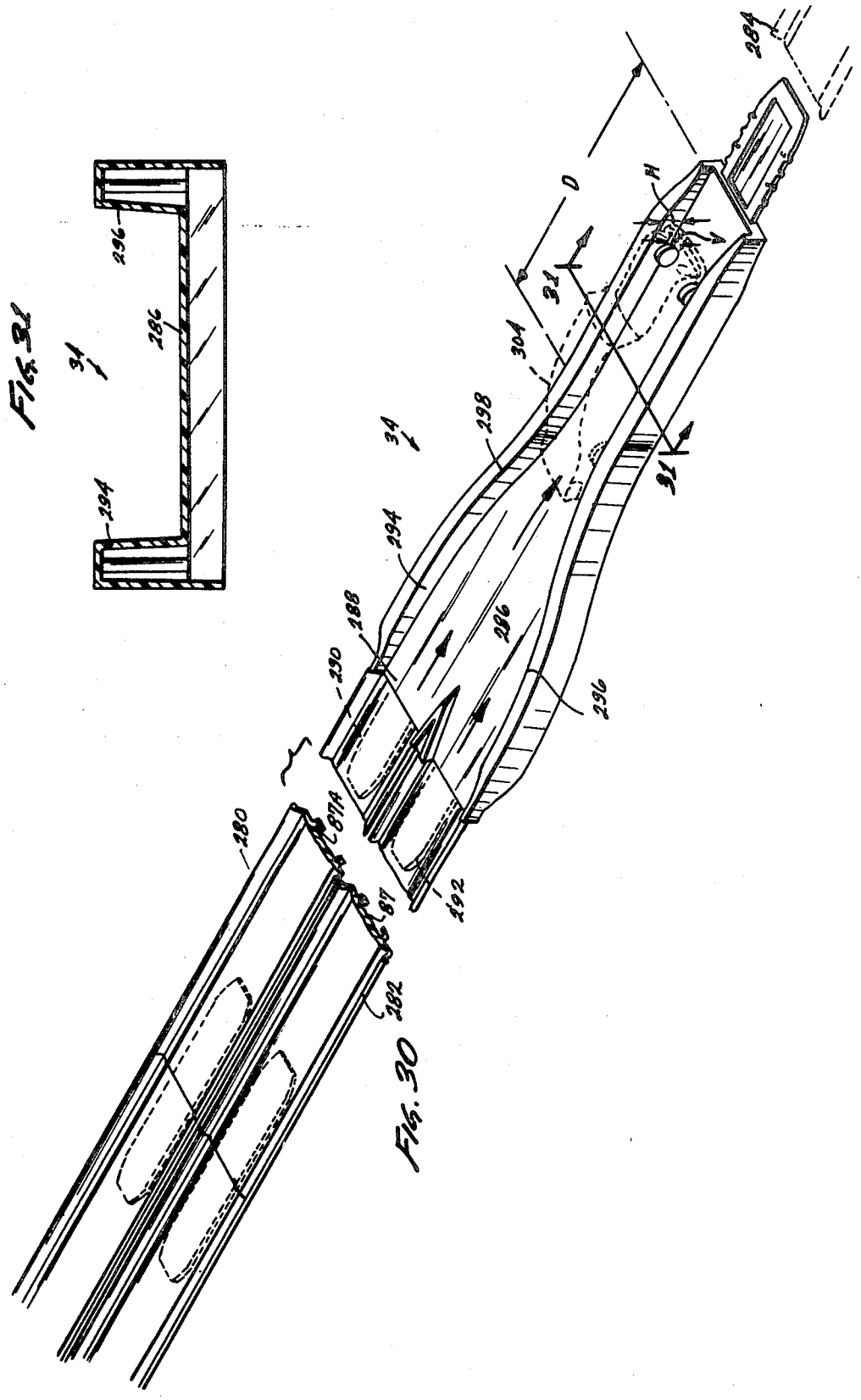


Fig. 28


Fig. 31
34
186
194
196
Fig. 30
34
180
182
184
186
188
190
192
194
196
198
304
D
H
91
91
87
87A

LOOPED TRAFFIC ACCESSORY

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is a Division of application Ser. No. 785,135, filed Dec. 19, 1968, now abandoned.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates to small car action toys.

2. Description of the Prior Art

Track systems for small toy cars are usually designed to be assembled on a living room floor for use with powered toy vehicles. If unpowered toy vehicles are to be used, small inclined frames may be included to form a small hill down which the vehicles can roll to gain speed. However, cost and packaging restrictions limit such frames to small hills, which results in low vehicle speed and inability to traverse long track layouts or properly move over accessories that require high vehicle speeds. Prior art track systems also do not readily lend themselves to arrangements for using two tracks together to provide racing games and stunt action sets where vehicles from the two tracks interact.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

One object of the present invention is to provide an economical track layout which enables unpowered toy vehicles to gain high speed.

Another object is to provide novel and entertaining accessory means for a toy track system.

In accordance with the present invention, a small car action toy is provided which includes track means forming a path for a toy vehicle. The track means is adapted to be connected to an elevated support, so one end can be raised to a substantial height. The track means is flexible to enable it to droop from the elevated support to the floor below so that at least some of the following track portions are supported by the floor.

Accessory means are provided which may be connected to the track means for changing the action of vehicles along the path of travel. The accessory means include a starting gate, a finish gate, a loop, a ski jump, a banked curve, and a merger (for merging two tracks into a single track). The track means includes individual track sections of short length for facilitating packaging, and connector means for connecting the track sections together.

The novel features of the invention are set forth with particularity in the appended claims. The invention will be best understood from the following description when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a small car action toy constructed in accordance with the invention;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of connector means and starting gate accessory means of the action toy of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a sectional view taken on the line 3—3 of FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is a sectional view taken on the line 4—4 of FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is a partial sectional view taken on the line 5—5 of FIG. 3;

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of loop-forming accessory means of the action toy of FIG. 1;

FIG. 7 is a partial plan view of a portion of the accessory means shown in FIG. 6;

FIG. 8 is a sectional view taken on line 8—8 of FIG. 7;

FIG. 9 is a sectional view taken on line 9—9 of FIG. 7;

FIG. 10 is a sectional view taken on line 10—10 of FIG. 7;

FIG. 11 is a plan view of banked curve accessory means of the action toy of FIG. 1;

FIG. 12 is a sectional view taken on line 12—12 of FIG. 11;

FIG. 13 is a sectional view taken on line 13—13 of FIG. 11;

FIG. 14 is a partial perspective view of the accessory means of FIG. 11;

FIGS. 15 and 16 are exploded, partial perspective views illustrating the connection of the ends of the accessory means of FIG. 11 to the track means of FIG. 1;

FIG. 17 is a perspective view of a trestle of the action toy of FIG. 1, shown with a section of track to which it can be connected;

FIG. 18 is a partial elevation view demonstrating how a trestle of the type shown in FIG. 17 may be placed on top of a second trestle;

FIG. 19 is a perspective view of ski jump accessory means of the action toy of FIG. 1;

FIG. 20 is a sectional view taken on line 20—20 of FIG. 19;

FIG. 21 is a partial sectional view taken on line 21—21 of FIG. 20;

FIG. 22 is an elevation view of a second banked curve of the action toy of FIG. 1;

FIG. 23 is a sectional view taken on line 23—23 of FIG. 22;

FIG. 24 is a sectional view taken on line 24—24 of FIG. 22;

FIG. 25 is a partial plan view of the accessory means of FIG. 22;

FIG. 26 is a perspective view of finish gate accessory means of the action toy of FIG. 1;

FIG. 27 is a sectional view taken on line 27—27 of FIG. 26;

FIG. 28 is a sectional view taken on line 28—28 of FIG. 26;

FIG. 29 is a sectional view taken on line 29—29 of FIG. 26;

FIG. 30 is a perspective view of track merger accessory means of the action toy of FIG. 1; and

FIG. 31 is a sectional view taken on line 31—31 of FIG. 30.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIG. 1 illustrates a small car action toy constructed in accordance with the invention, which is generally designated at 10. The toy includes track means 12 forming a path for toy vehicles, such as vehicles 14 and 16. The track 12 includes a first end 18 adapted to be attached to an elevated support 20, such as a table top, by connector means 22. The track has sufficient flexibility that it droops from support 20 to the floor, so that at least one portion of the track means is supported by the floor. Thus, toy vehicles initially move down a long steep incline so that they have sufficient speed to properly traverse the track course.

The action toy includes accessory means which may be connected in series with the track to interact with the vehicles in a novel manner. FIG. 1 illustrates seven of such accessory means including a starting gate **36**, a loop **24**, a 90° curve **26**, a ski jump **28**, a 180° curve **30**, a finish gate **32**, and a track merger **34**. Duplicate accessory means including a second track **12A**, second loop **24A**, second 90° curve **26A**, second ski jump **28A**, and second 180° curve **30A** can also be provided for a second of the cars. By starting the cars **14** and **16** together at the starting gate **36**, they can be made to race over similar courses to the finish gate **32**, and then through the merger **34** to a common track **284**.

FIGS. 2 through 5 shows details of the starting gate accessory means **36**, which may be used to simultaneously start the cars **14, 16** (shown by arrows in FIG. 2) for a race. The starting gate includes a frame or housing **38** having a bottom wall **40**, a top wall **42**, a rear wall **44**, a front wall **46** and a pair of side walls **48, 50**. The top wall **40** serves as a starting surface to hold the cars **14, 16** in a laterally spaced relationship so they can move over different tracks. The side walls **48, 50** have comparatively narrow front portions **52** and wide rear portions **54**, causing the top wall **42** to slope downwardly from its rear end **58** to its front end **56** so that the cars **14, 16** will be accelerated by gravity when they are permitted to roll down top wall **42**.

Cars **14, 16** are retained in position on top wall **42** by stop members **60, 62**, respectively, that abut the front bumpers of the cars. The stop members **60, 62** are carried by laterally-extending flanges **64, 66**, respectively. The flanges **64, 66** are supported on an actuator **65** that is pivotally connected to top wall **42** by a living hinge at **67**. A living hinge is a reduced-section in an integral member of flexible material such as polypropylene.

Actuator **65**, which is designed for manual operation, i.e. by a child pressing down on it, is biased to the position shown in FIGS. 1 through 4 by a rod-like cantilever spring **70**. This spring **70** has its free end **72** engaged in an inverted, V-shaped slot **74** provided in a depending plate **76** carried by actuator **65**. The fixed end **78** of the spring is affixed to a shelf **80** provided on bottom wall **40**, by a retaining clip **82**. When the actuator **65** is depressed by a child, the stop members move down simultaneously through apertures **81, 83** in the top wall, thereby simultaneously releasing the vehicles.

The starting gate accessory means **36** also includes a pair of integral connectors **84, 86** which extend forwardly and downwardly from front wall **46**, at the downpath end of the frame, for receiving the end **18** of track means **12** and the end **18A** of a parallel track means **12A**, respectively, which droop towards the floor. Connectors **84, 86** are adapted to engage channels **87** and **88** provided in tracks **12, 12A**, respectively. Connectors **84, 86** are retained in position within their associated channels **87, 88** by protruberances **90, 92**. The protuberances **90** and **92** extend from opposite faces of the connectors to enable tight engagement with the connecting track sections.

The starting gate **36** may be connected to the table **20** or other elevated support by the connector means **22**. The connector means is in the form of a C clamp with an anvil **94** and a screw **96**. The anvil is placed over an edge of the table, and the screw **96** is then tightened to hold it in place. The connector means or clamp **22** has a bracket or land **98** which is designed to hold a section of track **12** by engaging the walls of the channel **87** therein. However, it also can engage a channel **100** provided in bottom wall **40** of the starting gate **36**. In addition to the land **98**, the clamp is provided with a pair of lands **102, 104** on the long leg **106** of the anvil. The pair of lands **102** and **104** are employed when the clamp engages a vertically extending board of table top means, instead of a horizontal table top, since engagement with a vertical board results in only the lands **102** and **104** being almost horizontal. The two lands **102** and **104** enable two parallel tracks to be connected to the clamp when this is desired. In order to attach the clamp to a table, the screw **96**, which threadably engages a first short leg **108** on the clamp anvil, is turned to advance it toward a second short leg **110**, to hold the table **20** between the screw and the second short leg. The second short leg **110** has cutaway portions **111** and **113** that can receive edge molding and the like which may be present at the table top means. The portion **111** is designed to receive strips of decorative trim, while the portion **113** is designed to receive piping that is generally present at the edges of sofa cushions, matresses, and other upholstered pieces which serve as elevated table top means to be clamped onto.

FIGS. **6–10** illustrate the loop accessory means or loops **24, 24A**. Each includes a usually straight track section **116** which is held in the shape of a loop by a loop-forming frame or jig **118**. The jig of each loop such as loop **24** may be conveniently molded from a suitable plastic material in two identical halves **120** and **121**. Each half **120, 121** includes a base **122** carrying an integrally-formed arcuate track section **124**. The arcuate track section **124** has a first end merging into a connector **128** for connection to the main track **12** (or track **12A**, as the case may be). The arcuate track section also has a second elevated end **130** merging into a long curved connector **132** for joining to an end of track section **116**, by engaging channels **87** of track section **116**. Stand portions **131,133** support the jig halves on the floor. The identical halves **120** and **121** may be connected together by brackets **134, 135** formed on the jig halves during the molding operation. Each bracket **134, 135** includes a keyhole slot **136** at one end and a protuberance **138** at the other end. With this arrangement, identical jig halves may be connected by reversing them and engaging protuberances **138** on one jig half into the keyhole slot **136** on the other jig half.

The end **126** of the jig half receives vehicles moving substantially parallel to the ground, while the arcuate track sections **124** of the jig halves establish a one-turn helix for the vehicles. Finally, the vehicles are discharged at the end **126** of the other jig half **121** in a direction substantially parallel to the ground, and moving in the same direction as they were received. The vehicles must have an appreciable speed in order to pass around the loop. The speed attained by passing down a long incline from a table top generally is sufficient to enable passage around a small loop, in spite of friction-caused decreases in speed prior to reaching the loop.

FIGS. **11–16** show details of the 90° curve accessory **26**, which is shown supported above the ground by a bridge support or trestle **140**. As shown in FIG. **11**, the curve comprises a frame **142** which supports a curved and banked track portion **144** for connection in series with the main track **12**. A connector **146, 148** is formed at each end of the track portion, for engagement with the channel on the underside of an adjoining track sec-

tion. The frame can be laid on the floor, or can be supported by the trestle **140** by engagement of the trestle with a bracket **150** on the frame. As shown in FIG. **13**, the frame includes a support wall **151** which can support the outer edge of the curved track when the frame rests on the floor.

The banking of the curve varies from a preliminary level such as 20° at each end **152** and **154**, as shown in FIG. **12**, to a high level such as 55° at the center **156**, as shown in FIG. **13**. The substantial preliminary banking away from a horizontal plane at each end, twists the adjoining track sections into a gradually increasing banking angle. As a result, the rotation of the vehicles about their longitudinal axes while entering and leaving the banked track area occurs more gradually. A more rapid angular acceleration of the vehicles about their longitudinal axes would tend to make them unstable. While the same low angular acceleration could be achieved by using a larger curve, this would add to the cost of the accessory. It if often desirable to support the curve accessory above the ground, as on the trestle **140**, to hold adjacent portions of track **12** above the ground where they can easily be twisted into the initial banking angle.

FIGS. **15** and **16** illustrate the manner of connection of the curve accessory **26** with a track **12**. If it is assumed that the vehicles will move in the direction of arrows **158**, then the vehicles will leave the curve at the end having the connector **148**. It is desirable to bend over slightly the side walls **13** of the track to prevent a vehicle wheel from hitting a protruding side wall. Similarly, the sides of the curved track portion **144** can be bent outwardly slightly at the end **152** where the vehicles enter the curve.

FIG. **17** shows details of the trestle **140**, which is designed to support a simple track section, as well as some of the accessories such as the curve **26** described above. The trestle includes a bridge-like frame **160** which has a flat-topped bracket or land **162** on an upper beam **164**. The land has eight sides for facilitating engagement with a track member, such as an accessory or a simple track **12** which has walls forming continuous channels **87**. The large sides **166** of the land are a distance G apart, while the small sides **168** are spaced a larger distance H apart.

In order to attach the trestle **140** to a track **12**, the track is placed on the trestle with the track channels **87** formed by channel member **89** that extend toward each other, oriented parallel to the long sides **166**. Then the trestle is turned 45° so that the short sides **168** enter the channels **87**. In comparing the trestle land with the track **12**, it may be noted that the spacing G of the long sides of the trestle land is slightly less than the spacing G′ of the closest portions of the channel members **89**. Also, the spacing H of the short trestle sides is only slightly less than the width H′ between the bottom of the track channels **87** into which the short sides fit. This construction allows firm engagement of the trestle with the track member by a simple twist. The trestle does not have to be started at one end of a track section and slid all the way down to its final place.

The trestle **140** is designed for attachment to another trestle on top of it, for a two or greater level interchange. The legs **170** and **172** of the trestle frame **160** have undercut keyways **174** in them, while keys **176** are formed on each side of the trestle beam **164**. FIG. **18** illustrates the manner in which a key **176** of one trestle fits into the keyway of another trestle. The engagement is made by sliding the ends of the keys into the keyways.

FIGS. **19** through **21** illustrate the ski jump accessory **28** which allows a fast-moving vehicle to fly through the air for a small distance. The jump comprises two identical ramp members or jump sections **180** and **182**, placed so that there is a gap between them. One jump section **180** is used to direct a vehicle over the gap while the other **182** receives the flying vehicle. The jump section **180** includes a frame **184** which has an inclined track portion **186**. High walls **188** extend along each side of the track portion. The walls **188** are curved or flared outward at the upper part **190** of the incline, but at the bottom of the incline they are spaced approximately the same as the side walls of the rest of the track system. The lower part **192** has a connector **194** for reception in the channel **87** of an adjoining track **12**, to hold it to the adjoining track.

The frame **184** includes a stand **196** for supporting the upper end **190** of the track portion above the ground. The stand **196** is constructed as a separate unit to facilitate packaging. It is joined to the track portion by keys **198** in the track portion that fit into keyways **200** in the stand. The jump is set up by placing two jump sections at a particular spacing so that the vehicles can fly across when they are traveling at the anticipated speed. The sections should be aligned with each other, although the outward flaring of the sides **188** alows the vehicles to be captured even with considerably misalignment. The side walls **188** are preferably considerably higher than the maximum diameter H of the vehicle wheels of vehicles generally moved over the jump, and are generally higher than the bodies of the vehicles. This is to facilitate capturing a speedy vehicle that has jumped high.

FIGS. **22** through **25** illustrate a 180° curve accessory means **30**. This member is constructed in a manner similar to the 90° curve described above, in that is has end portions **202** and **204** which are banked at an appreciable angle such as 20°. The center **206** of the track portion **208** is banked even more, such as an angle of 55°. As mentioned above in the case of the 90° curve accessory, the initial banking causes the track sections connected to each end of the curve to be twisted into a gradually increasing banking. This reduces angular acceleration of the vehicle about a longitudinal axis to promote its stability. The 180° curve accessory includes connectors **210** and **212** at each end for connecting to adjoining track sections. A frame **214** supports its track portion either on the ground or on trestles. A pair of brackets **216** and **218** similar to the bracket on the 90° curve, enable attachment to trestles.

FIGS. **26** through **29** illustrate the finish gate accessory means **32** for use when racing two vehicles, to indicate which vehicle has won. The finish gate includes a frame **220** with a pair of laterally spaced connector lands or brackets **222** and **224** on its bottom member **226**. The brackets are designed to be received into the channels **87** and **88** on the under side of the tracks **12** and **12A** and to be moved along the length of the track sections to a desired location. Thus, vehicles traveling on the tracks **12**, **12A** pass through the finish gate and continue moving along the tracks.

A flagging member **232** which is pivotally mounted at a shaft **234** on the frame, can fall to either side to indicate which of the two cars has won. The flagging

member is operated by a pair of levers **236** and **238** which are pivotally mounted on the top member **240** of the frame.

The levers **236,238** have lower ends **242,244** which are designed to be struck by the vehicles so that they pivot the lever backwards and upwards. Prior to the levers being struck by a vehicle, holding elements **246** and **248** on the levers engage the flagging member to maintain it in an upright position. However, the first lever to be struck releases the flagging member to allow it to fall towards its side of the frame. The lever then falls until it is stopped by one of the stop ledges **250** or **252** on the frame sides **254,256.**

The shaft **234,** which pivotally supports the flagging member, is engaged with a bearing member **258** at the bottom of a bracket **260** that depends from the top member **240** of the frame. A knob **262** at the end of the shaft **234** retains it in place. The shaft **234** is located below the center of gravity of the flagging member, so that once the flagging member begins to fall to one side, it continues to fall until it hits a stop ledge. However, unless the flagging member is made to start falling to one side, it is uncertain as to which direction it will fall. The levers **236** and **238** are constructed to make sure that the flagging member will fall toward the lever that is first moved back by a vehicle, as will be described below.

As shown in FIG. **28,** the levers, such as lever **238,** are pivotally joined to a support **262** on the top member **240** by a living hinge **264.** The living hinge comprises an area of reduced cross section in a flexible material such as polypropylene. The flexible material out of which the lever is constructed allows it to twist slightly which is important in the operation of the device. As shown in FIG. **29,** the holding elements **246** and **248** have edges **266** and **268** that engage opposite sides of the flagging member **232.** The width W of the flagging member is greater than the separation of the forward portions of edges **266** and **268** when the levers **236** and **238** are unstressed. Thus, in order to fit between the forward part of the edges **266, 268,** the levers **236, 238** must be bent or twisted apart slightly.

Outward movement of the edges **266, 268** that hold the flagging member is accomplished by slight twisting of the levers. When one of the levers, such as lever **236,** is pushed back by a first vehicle, the backward movement of its holding element **246** allows the flagging member to fall to the left side, in the direction of arrow **270.** The holding element **248** of the other lever **238** helps by thrusting the flagging member in the direction of arrow **270,** while the lever **238** untwists. This provides a positive movement of the flagging member to one side. If a second car hits the lever **238** a moment later, it will have no effect because the flagging member has already started to fall to the left. In order to increase the thrust on the flagging member, the edges **266** and **268** are angled so the levers twist even more as one lever is pushed back. The angling also allows the levers to be only slightly stressed until the last moment when a car hits a lever, so that the introduction of permanent set is minimized.

The flagging member **232** is provided with a checkered design simulating the checkered flags generally used at the finish of auto races. A handle **272** is provided to aid in grasping the flagging member during resetting. Resetting for a new race is accomplished by moving the flagging member upright and slightly spreading apart the levers so that the holding elements **246, 248** lie on opposite sides of the flagging member.

FIGS. **30** and **31** illustrate merger accessory means **34** for allowsing vehicles received from two track sections **280** and **282** to travel along a single track section **284.** The merger apparatus comprises a track portion **286** having a wide up-path end **288,** which is at least as wide as two track sections, with connectors **290** and **292** for connection with the track sections **280** and **282.** Side walls **294** and **296** continually narrow the track portion from a position near the up-path end until it is only as wide, at the downpath end **298,** as the path of a single track section. The side walls **294** and **296** are almost parallel at the up-path end, but they quickly curve so they are angled toward each other at a continually increasing angle. At a position **298** they gradually turn the other way, so they are at a continually decreasing angle until they become parallel. The narrowest part of the track portion, where it is within 10 percent of the narrowest width, extends a substantial distance D which is more than one-third the length of the track portion **286** of the merger accessory. This substantial distance D of the narrowed portion is desirable to stablize the vehicle so it is running straight along the track. Along almost all of the track portion, the height H of the walls is greater than the height V of the wheels, shown at **300** and **302,** of a vehicle **304** which is designed to run along the merger accessory. Another connector **306** is located at the downpath end of the merger to connect to the track section **284.**

Thus, the invention provides means with several accessories for novel operation and guiding of the vehicles and track sections therefor. Although particular embodiments of the invention have been described and illustrated herein, it is recognized that modification and variations may readily occur to those skilled in the art, and consequently, it is intended that the claims be interpreted to cover such modifications and equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. Apparatus for forming a looped toy vehicle path from flexible guide track sections comprising:

a pair of substantially identical base members, each having an upwardly curved vehicle guiding portion extending from a substantially horizontal end to an upwardly sloping end;

connecting means extending from each end for connecting a vehicle guiding track section thereto in alignment with said ends, respectively; and

means securing said base members together in side-by-side relation with said substantially horizontal ends extending in respectively opposite directions whereby opposite ends of a section of flexible trackway may be connected to said connecting means at said upwardly sloping ends to form a helical loop.

2. Apparatus for forming a looped toy vehicle path from flexible guide track sections comprising:

a pair of substantially identical base members, each having an upwardly curved vehicle guiding portion extending from a substantially horizontal end to an upwardly sloping end;

tongue means extending from each end for connecting a vehicle guiding track section thereto in alignment with said ends, respectively; and

interlocking protuberances and sockets on said base members securing said base members together in side-by-side relation with said substantially horizontal ends extending in respectively opposite directions whereby opposite ends of a section of flexible trackway may be connected to said connecting means at said upwardly sloping ends to form a helical loop.

* * * * *