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(54) **AUTOMOBILE THEATER SYSTEM**

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(76) Inventor: **John W. Davenport SR., WilberForce, OH (US)**

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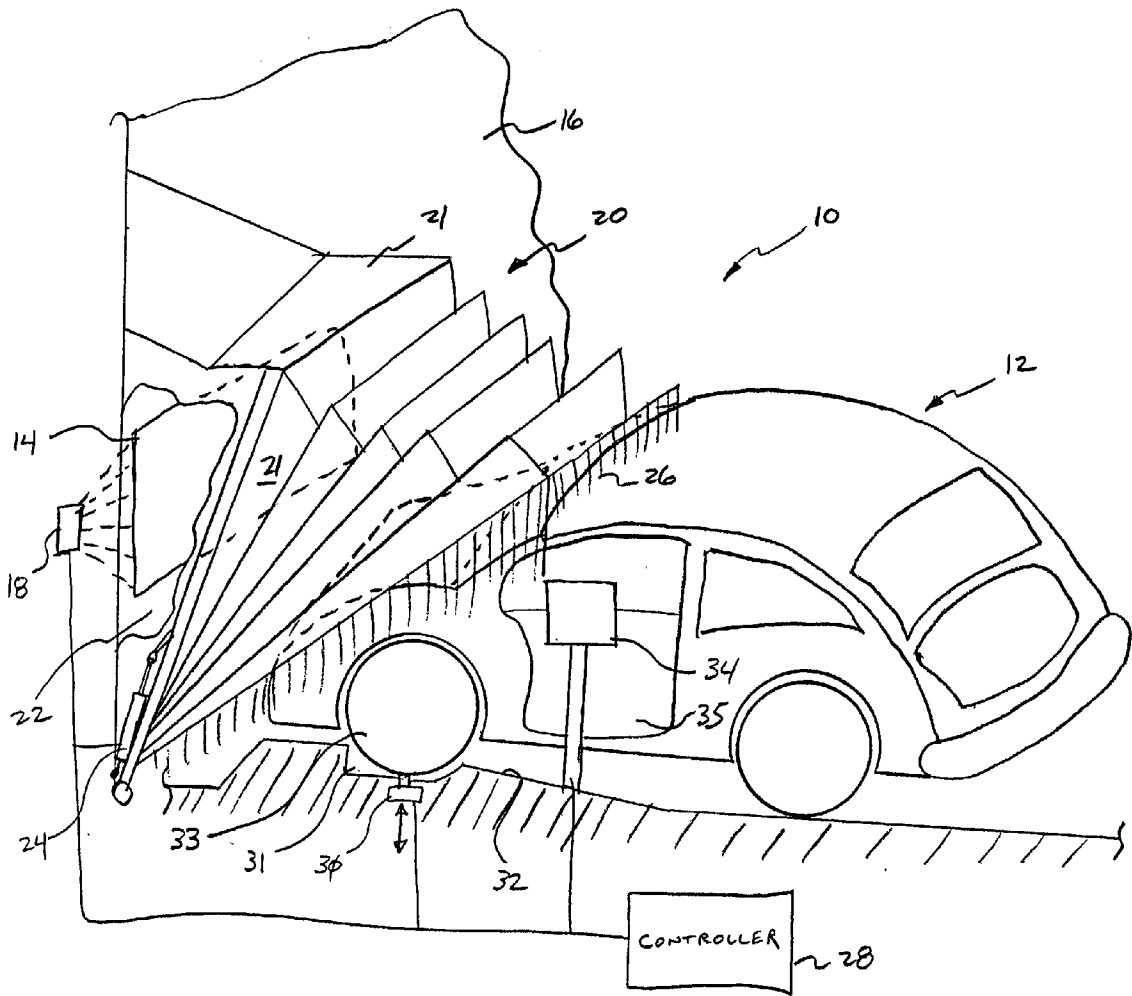
Correspondence Address:
John Wesley Davenport Sr
P.O. Box #6
WilberForce, OH 45384 (US)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An automobile theater system including a display screen adapted for use with a single automobile. A movable canopy provides a viewing chamber extending between the screen and the automobile. The theater system may be fixed in a stationary position or supported on a mobile platform.

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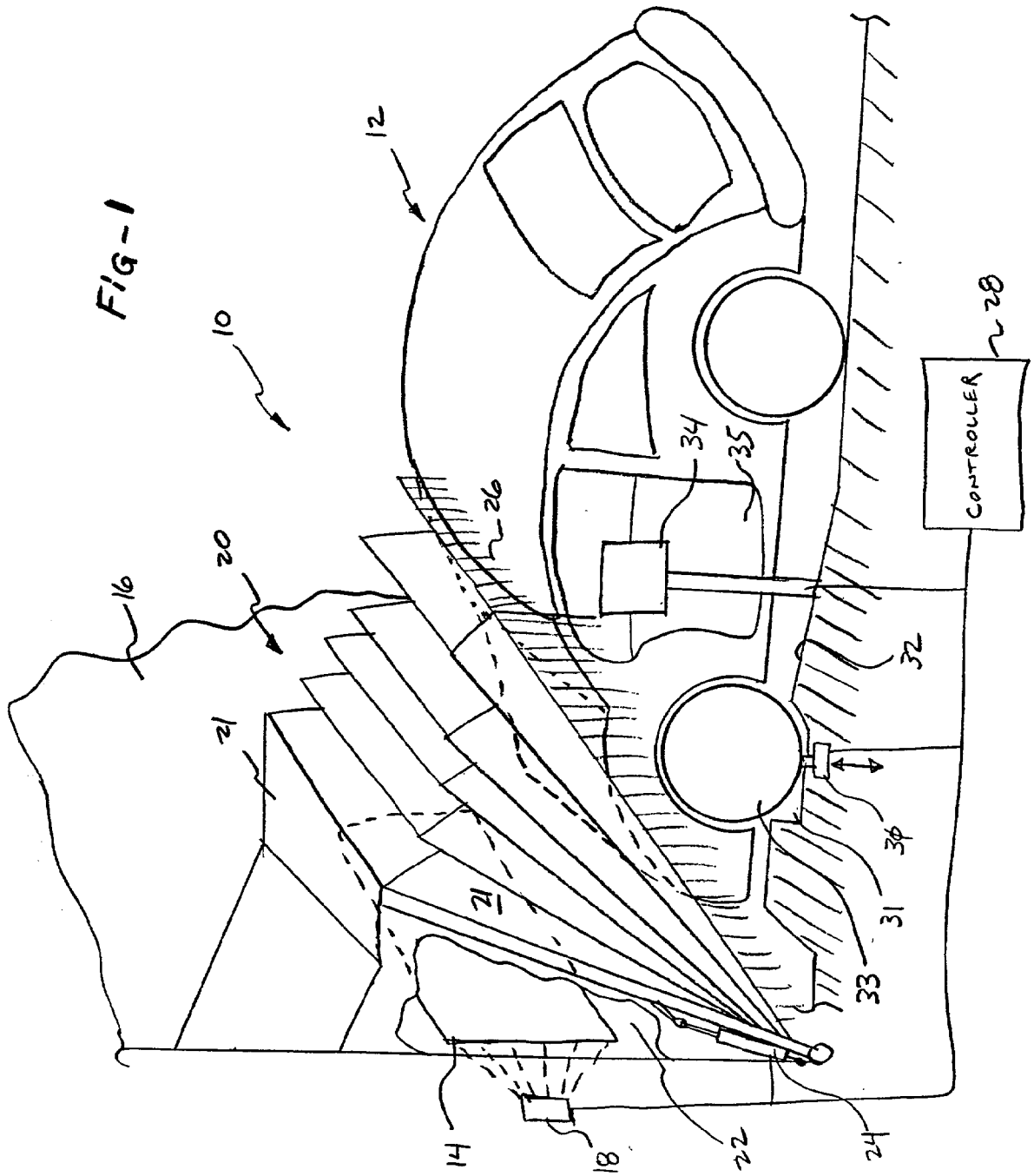
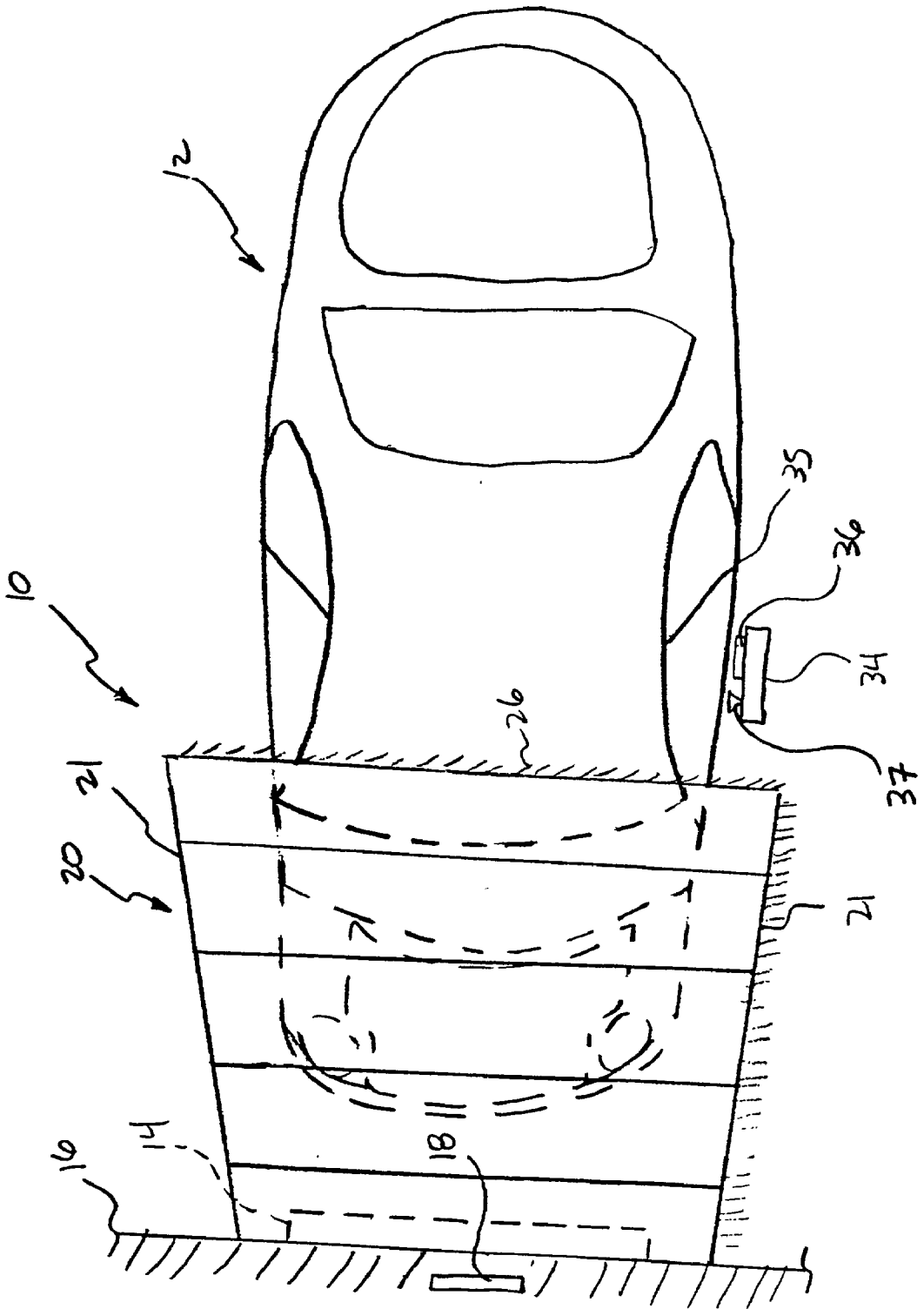


Fig-2



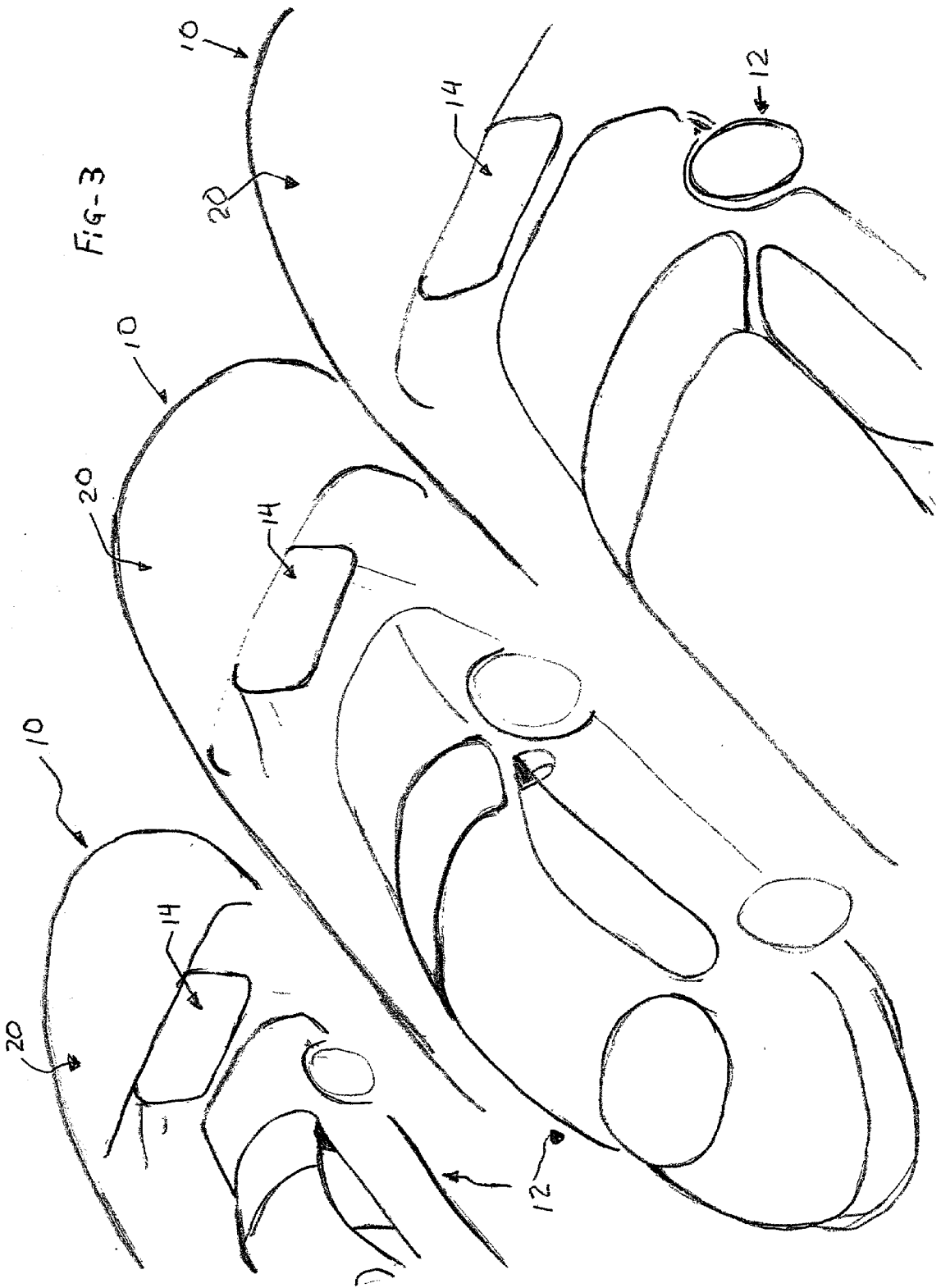
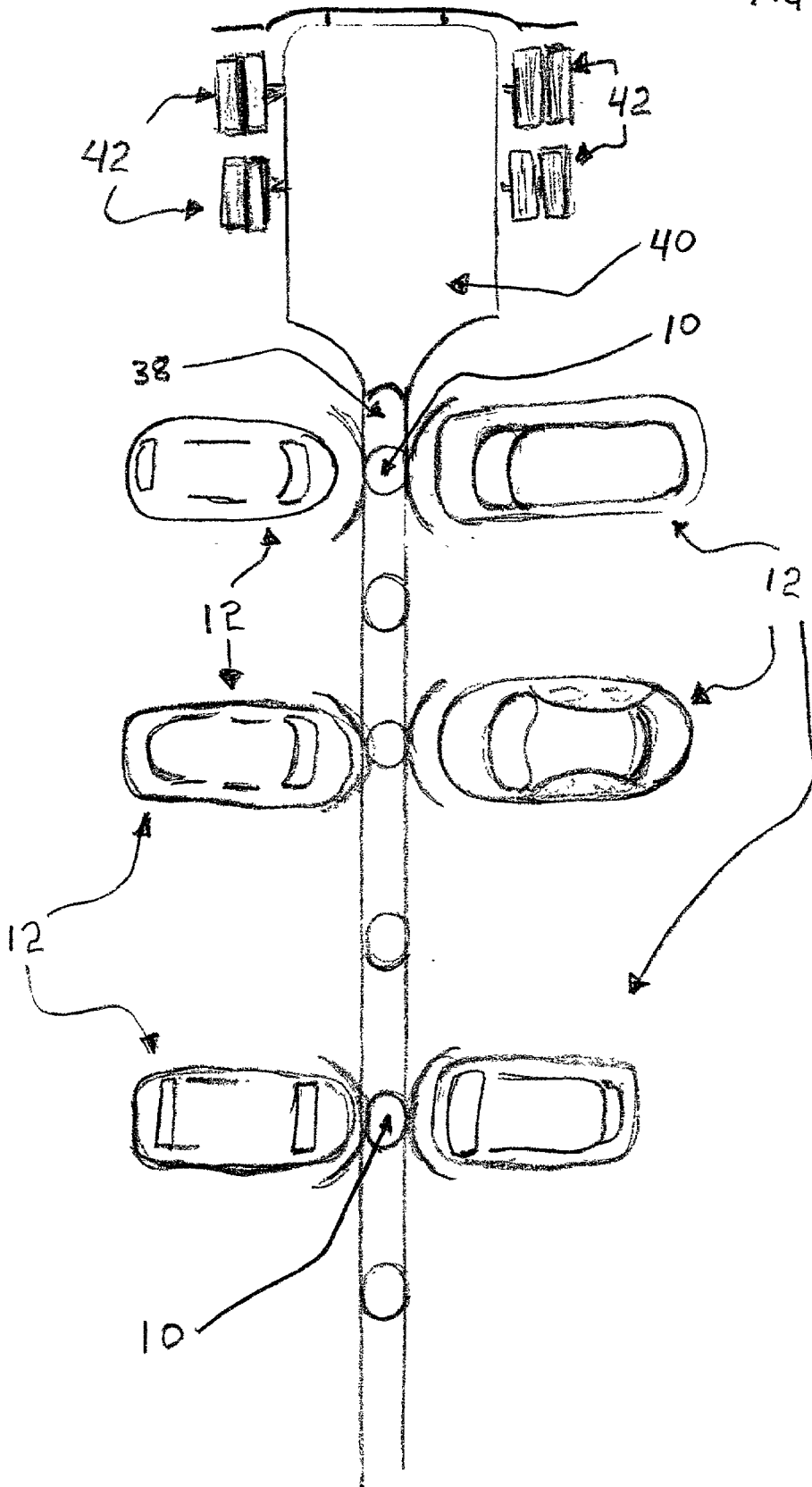


Fig-4



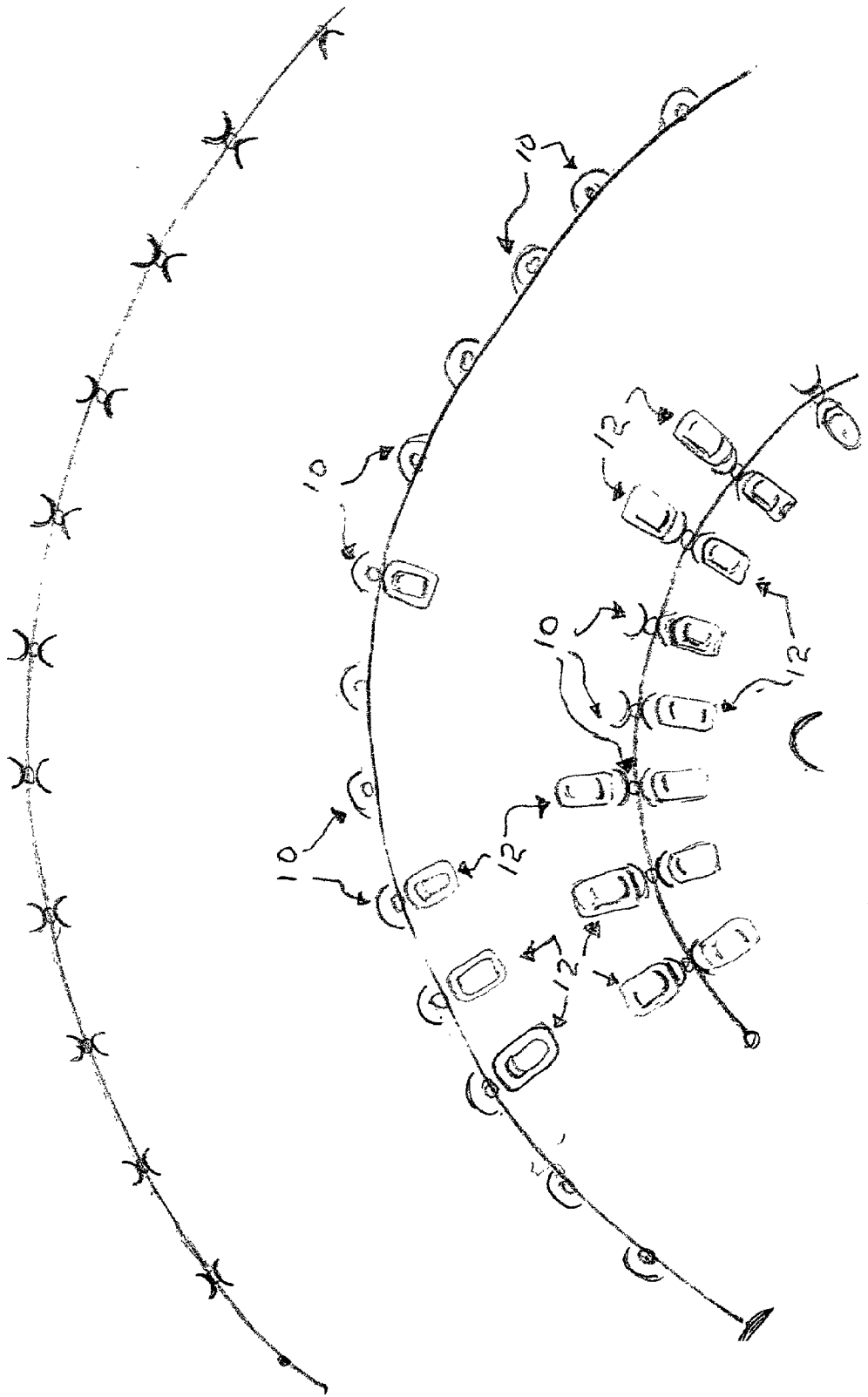


FIG - 5

AUTOMOBILE THEATER SYSTEM

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to a theater system and, more particularly, to a system adapted for use with an automobile.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0002] FIG. 1 is a perspective view, in partial schematic, of the automobile theater system of the present invention as seen from the front and left;

[0003] FIG. 2 is a top plan view of the automobile theater system of FIG. 1;

[0004] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a plurality of automobile theater systems of the present invention as seen from the top, front and right;

[0005] FIG. 4 is a top plan view of a further embodiment of the automobile theater system of the present invention; and

[0006] FIG. 5 is a top plan view of another embodiment of the automobile theater system of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0007] Referring initially to FIGS. 1 and 2, the automobile theater system 10 of the present invention is illustrated for use in connection with a motor vehicle, including an automobile 12. It should be noted that the system 10, as described below, may be positioned in any facility conventionally accessible to an automobile 12, including, but not limited to surface parking lots and parking garages.

[0008] If the automobile theater system 10 is provided in a conventional parking facility, it may be envisioned that the parking facility may be used for parking of automobiles 12 during daylight hours and utilized for displaying of audio-visual works at night.

[0009] The theater system 10 includes a display screen 14 supported by a support structure 16. The support structure 16 may comprise a conventional stand or, alternatively, may comprise a wall, such as that found in a parking garage. A projector 18 is provided in proximity to the support structure 16 for displaying a desired audio-visual work, such as a movie or video, on the screen 14.

[0010] A hood or canopy 20 is provided in proximity to the screen 14 and is preferably supported by the stand 16. The canopy 20 includes opaque walls 21 which may be extended or retracted in order to provide a viewing chamber 22 for passengers within the automobile 12. The viewing chamber 22 as provided by the canopy 20 provides for privacy to the viewers of the audio-visual work and eliminates undesired distractions. The canopy 20 is operably connected to a linear actuator 24, preferably a hydraulic or pneumatic cylinder. As may be readily appreciated, extension of the actuator 24 results in telescoping movement of the canopy 20 away from the support structure 16 and towards the automobile 12. A fringe element 26 is supported by the canopy 20 and may contact the automobile 12 to provide a substantially light impermeable seal therebetween.

[0011] A controller 28 controls the operation of the projector 18 and the actuator 24 (FIG. 1). A positioning sensor

30 is provided for detecting a position of the automobile 12. More particularly, the positioning sensor 30 is positioned within a locating notch 31 within supporting pavement 32 for detecting a proper location of a front wheel 33 of the automobile 12. When the wheel 33 is properly positioned as detected by the positioning sensor 30, it transmits a signal to the controller 28. As such, the controller 28 determines that the automobile 12 is in position for viewing an audio-visual work at the screen 14.

[0012] A control stand 34 may be provided adjacent the driver's side door 35 of the automobile 12. The control stand 34 may include a selection entry pad 36 for entry of information regarding a desired audio-visual work and a speaker 37 (FIG. 2) where audio may be transmitted to the occupants of the automobile 12. It may also be appreciated that audio may be transmitted from the projector 18 in a wireless fashion to the radio (not shown) of the automobile 12.

[0013] Turning now to FIG. 3, a plurality of automobile theater systems 10 are illustrated in operation. The systems 10 may be utilized with conventional parking spaces in parallel disposition.

[0014] Referring to FIG. 4, a further embodiment of the invention is illustrated as including a plurality of automobile theater systems 10 disposed on a mobile platform 38. The mobile platform 38 is preferably supported by a trailer 40 including a plurality of wheels 42 such that the platform 38 may be moved to various locations. For example, the platform 38 may be provided in one location for a first duration of time and then moved to a remote second location for a second duration of time. It is envisioned that additional mobile trailers (not shown) may be provided for restroom and concession facilities in connection with the trailer 40.

[0015] Turning now to FIG. 5, a further embodiment of the invention is illustrated as including a plurality of automobile theater systems 10 utilized at a retrofitted conventional drive-in movie theater. More particularly, the individual parking spaces may each be provided with a single automobile theater system 10 for individual viewing.

[0016] It should be appreciated that the controller 28 supplies audio-visual works to each individual automobile theater system 10 on demand. In other words, when a plurality of automobile theater systems 10 are utilized in a single location, each automobile may be supplied with a different audio-visual work beginning at any time selected by the viewer. The occupants of the automobile 12 have the freedom to select one of a plurality of audio-visual works for viewing on the screen 14 and for determining when the audio-visual work should begin playing. Provisions may be provided in the control stand 34 for controlling display of the audio-visual work, for example, stopping or pausing playback.

What is claimed is:

- 1. An automobile theater system comprising:
 - a screen;
 - a canopy supported for movement relative to said screen and adapted for positioning adjacent an automobile; and
 - an actuator operably connected to said canopy.

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