

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
27 July 2006 (27.07.2006)

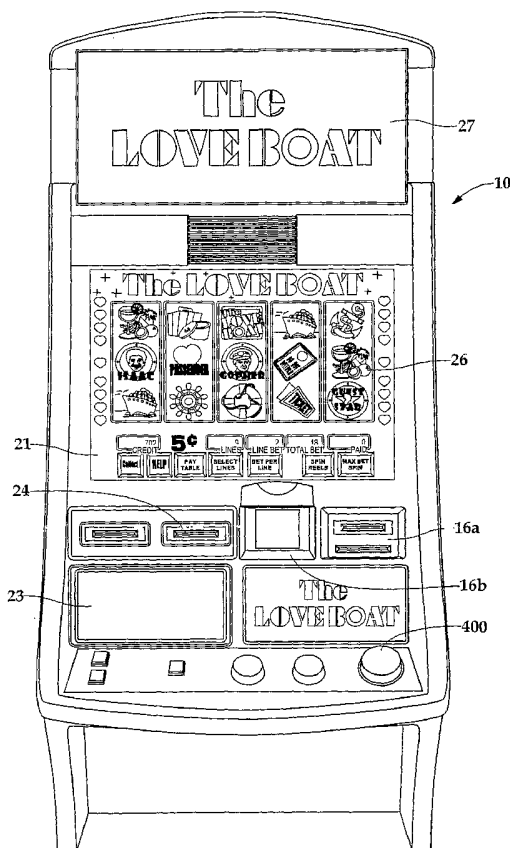
PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2006/078670 A2

- (51) International Patent Classification: Not classified
- (21) International Application Number:
PCT/US2006/001651
- (22) International Filing Date: 17 January 2006 (17.01.2006)
- (25) Filing Language: English
- (26) Publication Language: English
- (30) Priority Data:
60/645,481 18 January 2005 (18.01.2005) US
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- (81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, LY, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.
- (84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).
- Declarations under Rule 4.17:**
— as to the applicant's entitlement to claim the priority of the earlier application (Rule 4.17(iii))

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: WAGERING GAME WITH ENHANCEMENT FEATURE FOR BONUS-TRIGGERING EVENT



(57) Abstract: A gaming terminal is utilized for playing a wagering game having a basic game and a bonus game. The gaming terminal has a wager-input device. A display displays a plurality of moveable reels having symbols located thereon during the basic game. The symbols indicate a randomly-selected outcome selected from a plurality of outcomes. The basic game implements a special mode in response to an enablement by a player. In response to the special mode being enabled and the moveable reels displaying less than a full bonus-triggering combination, the moveable reels not displaying a portion of the full bonus-triggering combination are re-spun.



— of inventorship (Rule 4.17(iv))

Published:

— without international search report and to be republished
upon receipt of that report

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

WAGERING GAME WITH ENHANCEMENT FEATURE FOR BONUS-TRIGGERING EVENT

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates generally to gaming terminals for playing a wagering game and, more particularly, to a gaming terminal having a plurality of movable symbol-bearing reels and having a feature for providing a special mode, implemented upon payment of an additional wager, pursuant to which symbol-bearing reels on which no bonus symbols are displayed after a first spin are re-spun to give the player additional opportunities to earn a bonus.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Gaming machines, such as slot machines, video poker machines, and the like, have been a cornerstone of the gaming industry for several years. Generally, the popularity of such machines with players is dependent on the likelihood (or perceived likelihood) of winning money at the machine and the intrinsic entertainment value of the machine relative to other available gaming options. Where the available gaming options include a number of competing machines and the expectation of winning each machine is roughly the same (or believed to be the same), players are most likely to be attracted to the most entertaining and exciting of the machines.

[0003] Consequently, shrewd operators strive to employ the most entertaining and exciting machines available because such machines attract frequent play and, hence, increase profitability to the operator. In the competitive gaming machine industry, there is a continuing need for gaming machine manufacturers to produce new types of games, or enhancements to existing games, which will attract frequent play by enhancing the entertainment value and excitement associated with the game.

[0004] One concept that has been successfully employed to enhance the entertainment value of a game is that of a "bonus" game which may be played in conjunction with a "basic" game. The bonus game may comprise any type of game, either similar to or completely different from the basic game, and is entered upon the occurrence of a selected event or outcome of the basic game. Such a bonus game produces a significantly higher level of player excitement than the basic game because it provides a greater expectation of winning than the basic game.

[0005] Another concept that has been employed is the use of a progressive jackpot. In the gaming industry, a “progressive” involves collecting coin-in data from participating gaming device(s) (e.g., slot machines), contributing a percentage of that coin-in data to a jackpot amount, and awarding that jackpot amount to a player upon the occurrence of a certain jackpot-won event. The percentage of the coin-in is determined prior to any result being achieved and is independent of any result. A jackpot-won event typically occurs when a “progressive winning position” is achieved at a participating gaming device. If the gaming device is a slot machine, a progressive winning position may, for example, correspond to alignment of progressive jackpot reel symbols along a certain payline. The initial progressive jackpot is a predetermined minimum amount. That jackpot amount, however, progressively increases as players continue to play the gaming machine without winning the jackpot. Further, when several gaming machines are linked together such that several players at several gaming machines compete for the same jackpot, the jackpot progressively increases at a much faster rate, which leads to further player excitement.

[0006] In current basic games, the player is usually given a single opportunity to achieve entry to the bonus game. For example, if the player achieves less than a threshold number of bonus symbols required to achieve entry to the bonus game, the player typically has to place another bet and play the basic game from the beginning to try again to achieve the threshold number of bonus symbols. However, in the event that the player continues to fail to achieve the bonus, or comes tantalizing close to achieving the bonus (e.g., by achieving one less than the required number of bonus symbols), the player may become bored and move on to a different game. There are also gaming machines that change a payback percentage during a bonus game based on the amount of an initial wager, but not the player's chances of achieving a bonus. Current basic games also often give the player a predetermined amount of an item (e.g., five free spins) upon achievement of the bonus, instead of increasing the amount of the items available to the player when the player has made a second wager.

[0007] Thus, there is a need to allow a player to make an additional wager prior to playing the basic game, in exchange for an additional opportunity to achieve a bonus while in the middle of the basic game. This way, the player can achieve a portion of what is required to initiate the bonus, and then get a second chance to achieve the rest of the minimum required bonus combination. Wagering games need to include additional features that will

maintain the player's interest and enhance entertainment. The present invention is directed to satisfying this and other needs.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] The present invention is directed to a gaming terminal for playing a wagering game having a basic game and a bonus game. The gaming terminal includes a wager-input device. A display displays a plurality of moveable reels having symbols located thereon during the basic game. The symbols indicate a randomly-selected outcome selected from a plurality of outcomes. The basic game implements a special mode in response to an enablement by a player. In response to the special mode being enabled and at least one of the moveable reels displaying less than a full bonus-triggering combination, the moveable reels not displaying a portion of the full bonus-triggering combination are re-spun.

[0009] The present invention is also directed to a method of conducting a wagering game. A wager is received from a player. A game outcome is randomly selected from a plurality of outcomes in response to the wager. The game outcome for the wagering game is displayed as symbols on a plurality of symbol-bearing reels in alignment along at least one payline. A special mode is enabled that re-spins at least one of the symbol-bearing reels not displaying a portion of a full bonus-triggering combination after an initial spin.

[0010] The present invention is further directed to a gaming terminal for playing a wagering game. The gaming terminal includes at least one display and a controller coupled to the display. The controller is programmed to move symbols on a plurality of moveable reels across the display to indicate an outcome of a plurality of outcomes during an initial spin. The controller also enables a special mode to re-spin the moveable reels not displaying a portion of a full bonus-triggering combination after the initial spin.

[0011] The present invention is further directed to a gaming terminal for playing a wagering game having a basic game and a bonus game. The gaming terminal has a wager-input device and a display for displaying the basic game and the bonus game and implementing a special mode in response to an enablement by a player. In response to the special mode being enabled and the occurrence of a bonus-triggering event during the basic game, a special bonus game segment of the bonus game provides enhanced bonus awards.

[0012] The present invention is further directed to a method of conducting a wagering game having a basic game and a bonus game. A wager is received from a player, and the

basic game and the bonus game are displayed. A special mode is enabled, and upon the occurrence of a bonus-triggering event during the basic game, a special bonus game segment of the bonus game provides enhanced bonus awards.

[0013] The above summary of the present invention is not intended to represent each embodiment or every aspect of the present invention. The detailed description and Figures will describe many of the embodiments and aspects of the present invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] The foregoing and other advantages of the invention will become apparent upon reading the following detailed description and upon reference to the drawings.

[0015] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a video gaming terminal according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0016] FIG. 2 is a block diagram of the gaming terminal of FIG. 1.

[0017] FIG. 3 illustrates a bank of gaming terminals according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0018] FIGS. 4 and 5 illustrate a gaming terminal implementing a wagering game, and having a special mode initiating button according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0019] FIG. 6 illustrates the results on an initial spin of the wagering game according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0020] FIG. 7 illustrates the results on an initial spin of the wagering game where the "Hot Red Pennies" mode has been enabled according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0021] FIG. 8 illustrates the re-spinning of the reels on which the bonus symbol are not displayed after the first spin according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0022] FIG. 9 illustrates the results of the re-spun reels according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0023] FIGS. 10 and 11 illustrate display screens of a bonus game according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0024] While the invention is susceptible to various modifications and alternative forms, specific embodiments have been shown by way of example in the drawings and will be described in detail herein. It should be understood, however, that the invention is not intended to be limited to the particular forms disclosed. Rather, the invention is to cover all

modifications, equivalents, and alternatives falling within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

[0025] FIG. 1 shows a perspective view of a typical gaming terminal 10 used by gaming establishments, such as casinos. With regard to the present invention, the gaming terminal 10 may be any type of gaming terminal and may have varying structures and methods of operation. For example, the gaming terminal 10 may be a mechanical gaming terminal configured to play mechanical slots, or it may be an electromechanical or electrical gaming terminal configured to play video slots or a video casino game, such as blackjack, slots, keno, poker, etc.

[0026] As shown, the gaming terminal 10 includes input devices, such as a wager acceptor 16 (shown as a card wager acceptor 16a and a cash wager acceptor 16b), a touch screen 21, a push-button panel 22, and an information reader 24. For outputs, the gaming terminal 10 includes a payout mechanism 23, a main display 26 for displaying information about the basic wagering game, and a secondary display 27 that may display an electronic version of a pay table, and/or also possibly game-related information or other entertainment features. While these typical components found in the gaming terminal 10 are described below, it should be understood that numerous other elements may exist and may be used in any number of combinations to create various forms of a gaming terminal.

[0027] The wager acceptor 16 may be provided in many forms, individually or in combination. The cash wager acceptor 16a may include a coin slot acceptor or a note acceptor to input value to the gaming terminal 10. The card wager acceptor 16b may include a card-reading device for reading a card that has a recorded monetary value with which it is associated. The card wager acceptor 16b may also receive a card that authorizes access to a central account, which can transfer money to the gaming terminal 10.

[0028] Also included is the payout mechanism 23, which performs the reverse functions of the wager acceptor. For example, the payout mechanism 23 may include a coin dispenser or a note dispenser to output value from gaming terminal 10. Also, the payout mechanism 23 may also be adapted to receive a card that authorizes the gaming terminal to transfer credits from the gaming terminal 10 to a central account.

[0029] The push button panel 22 is typically offered, in addition to the touch screen 21, to provide players with an option on how to make their game selections. Alternatively, the push button panel 22 provides inputs for one aspect of operating the game, while the touch screen 21 allows for inputs needed for another aspect of operating the game.

[0030] The outcome of the basic wagering game is displayed to the player on the main display 26. The main display 26 may take the form of a cathode ray tube (CRT), a high resolution LCD, a plasma display, LED, or any other type of video display suitable for use in the gaming terminal 10. As shown, the main display 26 includes the touch screen 21 overlaying the entire monitor (or a portion thereof) to allow players to make game-related selections. Alternatively, the gaming terminal 10 may have a number of mechanical reels to display the game outcome, as well.

[0031] In some embodiments, the information reader 24 is a card reader that allows for identification of a player by reading a card with information indicating his or her true identity. Currently, identification is used by casinos for rewarding certain players with complimentary services or special offers. For example, a player may be enrolled in the gaming establishment's players' club and may be awarded certain complimentary services as that player collects points in his or her player-tracking account. The player inserts his or her card into the player-identification card reader 24, which allows the casino's computers to register that player's wagering at the gaming terminal 10. The information reader 24 may also include a keypad (not shown) for entering a personal identification number (PIN). The gaming terminal 10 may require that the player enter their PIN prior to obtaining information. The gaming terminal 10 may use the secondary display 27 for providing the player with information about his or her account or other player-specific information. Also, in some embodiments, the information reader 24 may be used to restore assets that the player achieved during a previous game session and had saved.

[0032] As shown in FIG. 2, the various components of the gaming terminal 10 are controlled by a central processing unit (CPU) 30 (such as a microprocessor or microcontroller). To provide the gaming functions, the CPU 30 executes a game program that allows for the randomly selected outcome. The CPU 30 is also coupled to or includes a local memory 32. The local memory 32 may comprise a volatile memory 33 (e.g., a random-access memory (RAM)) and a non-volatile memory 34 (e.g., an EEPROM). It should be

appreciated that the CPU 30 may include one or more microprocessors. Similarly, the local memory 32 may include multiple RAM and multiple program memories.

[0033] Communications between the peripheral components of the gaming terminal 10 and the CPU 30 occur through input/output (I/O) circuits 35a. As such, the CPU 30 also controls and receives inputs from the peripheral components of the gaming terminal 10. Further, the CPU 30 communicates with external systems via the I/O circuits 35b. Although the I/O circuits 35 may be shown as a single block, it should be appreciated that the I/O circuits 35 may include a number of different types of I/O circuits.

[0034] In some embodiments, the CPU 30 may not be inside the gaming terminal 10. Instead, the CPU 30 may be part of a game network 50 (FIG. 2) and may be used to control numerous gaming terminals 10. In these embodiments, the CPU 30 will run the basic games for each of the gaming terminals 10, and may also be used to link the gaming terminals 10 together. The game network 50 can include progressive jackpots that are contributed to by all or some of the gaming terminals 10 in the network (*e.g.*, terminal-level jackpots that only each terminal 10 contributes to, bank-level jackpots that are contributed to by all of the terminals 10 in a particular bank, and wide-area jackpots that are contributed to by a larger number of terminals 10, such as multiple banks). Alternatively, the game network 50 can allow the player to retrieve assets obtained while playing one terminal 10 at a different gaming terminal that is also part of the game network. Assets may be any number of things, including, but not limited to, monetary or non-monetary awards, features that a player builds up in a bonus or progressive game to win awards, etc.

[0035] In some embodiments, the CPU 30 is also used with the information reader 24 to restore saved assets. For example, in one embodiment, the information reader 24 is adapted to receive and distribute tickets (see FIG. 4). The tickets each include a unique identifier. The unique identifier links the ticket to a file contained within the local memory 32 or a system memory 52 located in the game network 50. The file includes the assets that are being stored from a previous game. Monetary awards include game credits or money, while the non-monetary awards can be bonus tokens, free plays (*e.g.*, free spins), multipliers, or access to bonus and/or progressive games. The player may also be awarded the option of selecting between receiving a certain value of standard credits or receiving bonus tokens that are redeemable for a special wagering event.

[0036] The gaming terminal 10 and associated gaming control system is capable of executing wagering games on or through a controller 60. Controller 60, as used herein, comprises any combination of hardware, software, and/or firmware that may be disposed or resident inside and/or outside of a gaming terminal 10 or like machine which may communicate with and/or control the transfer of data between the gaming terminal and a bus, another computer, processor, or device, and/or a service and/or a network. The network may include, but is not limited to a peer-to-peer, client/server, master/slave, star network, ring network, bus network, or other network architecture wherein at least one processing device (e.g., computer) is linked to at least one other processing device. The controller 60 may comprise the I/O circuits 35b and the CPU 30. In other embodiments, the CPU 30 may be housed outside of the controller 60, and a different processor may be housed within the controller 60. The controller 60, as used herein, may comprise one or more controllers. In one implementation, each gaming terminal 10 comprises, or is connected to, a controller 60 enabling each gaming terminal 10 to transmit and/or receive signals, preferably both, in a peer-to-peer arrangement. In another example, the controller 60 may be adapted to facilitate communication and/or data transfer for one or more gaming terminals 10 in a client/server or centralized arrangement. In one aspect, shown in FIG. 2, the controller 60 may connect the gaming terminal 10 via a conventional I/O port and communication path (e.g. serial, parallel, IR, RC, 10bT, etc.) to a game network 50, which may include, for example, other gaming terminals connected together in the network 50.

[0037] FIG. 3 illustrates a bank 300 of gaming terminals 305, 310, 315, and 320 according to an embodiment of the invention. Each of the gaming terminals 305, 310, 315, and 320 may implement a wagering game having a gaming enhancement feature entitled "Hot Red Pennies." "Hot Red Pennies" is an enhancement feature/mode that makes it easier for a player to achieve a bonus. Specifically, when in the "Hot Red Pennies" mode and the player plays the wagering game and fails to achieve the minimum combination of bonus symbols to achieve the bonus, reels on which no bonus symbols were visible are re-spun to give the player an extra chance to achieve the bonus. In some embodiments, the player must achieve a minimum number of bonus symbols visible on the reels before any of the reels will be re-spun. For example, if three bonus symbols at any location on the display are required to trigger the bonus (i.e., scattered symbols), and the player has achieved only two bonus symbols after the initial spin, the other reels are re-spun when the "Hot Red Pennies" mode

has been enabled. However, if only one of the bonus symbols was visible, then none of the reels would be re-spun even in the “Hot Red Pennies” mode. In other embodiments, only one (or even zero) bonus symbols need to be visible prior to the re-spinning of the reels when the “Hot Red Pennies” mode has been enabled.

[0038] The “Hot Red Pennies” feature is available to the player, and may be enabled by making a second wager, in addition to the standard wager at the start of the wagering game. The “Hot Red Pennies” feature may be implemented in a slot game having a plurality of moveable reels, where bonus features are achieved based on either scatter or single-line payouts.

[0039] As illustrated, the first gaming terminal 305 implements a wagering game called “Quaker\$,” the second gaming terminal 310 implements a wagering game called “Jackpot Party,” the third gaming terminal 315 implements a game called “The Love Boat,” and the fourth gaming terminal 320 implements a game called “Milk Money.” Each of these gaming terminals may be located near a “Hot Red Pennies” marquee 325. Each of these gaming terminals may offer the player an opportunity to earn free spins when a bonus is achieved. The “Hot Red Pennies” feature may also be implemented with other games in which bonuses other than free spins are available to the player, such as “Gem Hunter” (based on a jungle theme), “King of Africa” (based on an African safari theme), and “Blue Lagoon” (based on a Caribbean theme).

[0040] FIGS. 4 and 5 illustrate the third gaming terminal 315 implementing a wagering game, and having a special mode initiating button 400 according to an embodiment of the invention. As shown, the gaming terminal 315 implements a wagering game entitled “The Love Boat,” in which a player may be awarded free spins upon achieving a bonus. The gaming terminal 315 includes a special mode initiating button 400 to implement the “Hot Red Pennies” mode. After making an initial wager to play the basic wagering game, the player may press the special mode initiating button 400 to enable the “Hot Red Pennies” mode. After pressing this button 400, the player is required to wager additional credits to enable the “Hot Red Pennies” mode.

[0041] As shown in FIG. 5, after the “Hot Red Pennies” mode has been enabled, a symbol 500 representing a penny on fire appears on the display screen. Although shown in the upper right hand corner of the display screen in FIG. 5, the penny-on-fire symbol 500 may be displayed anywhere on the screen. The penny-on-fire symbol 500 indicates that the “Hot

Red Pennies” mode is enabled. Also, the special mode initiating button 400 flashes or emits light, via a light in the bezzel, to further indicate that the mode is enabled.

[0042] FIG. 6 illustrates the results on an initial spin of the wagering game according to an embodiment of the invention. In the event that the wagering game allows scatter combinations of symbols to trigger a bonus, these three bonus symbols would represent a winning combination that would trigger the bonus. The display screen shown in FIG. 6 is for the wagering game when the “Hot Red Pennies” mode has not been enabled. Although a winning combination is displayed, if the player had only achieved two of the bonus symbols, the player would not have been awarded the bonus. Because the player achieved the bonus when the “Hot Red Pennies” mode was not enabled, the player is awarded a set amount of a bonus item (e.g., five free spins) or a chance to play a bonus game, such as the one shown in FIGS. 10 and 11.

[0043] FIG. 7 illustrates the results on an initial spin of the wagering game where the “Hot Red Pennies” mode was enabled according to an embodiment of the invention. As shown, two bonus symbols are displayed (on the first 700 and third 710 reels), which would not be enough to trigger the bonus. However, because the “Hot Red Pennies” mode was enabled by activating the button 400 and paying a secondary wager, the reels on which the bonus symbol was not displayed will be re-spun. In other words, because the first 700 and the third 710 reels are the only ones on which the bonus symbol are displayed, the second 705, fourth 715 and fifth 720 reels will be re-spun.

[0044] FIG. 8 illustrates the re-spinning of the reels on which the bonus symbol were not displayed after the first spin according to an embodiment of the invention. As shown, the second 705, fourth 715 and fifth 720 reels are in the process of being re-spun due to the enabled “Hot Red Pennies” mode. As shown, the penny-on-fire symbol 500 may move across the display during the re-spins. As discussed above, with respect to FIG. 3, in some embodiments, in the “Hot Red Pennies” mode, reels are only re-spun when at least two of the reels displays a bonus-triggering symbol. In other embodiments, all of the reels are re-spun even if only one (or none) of the reels display a bonus-triggering symbol.

[0045] FIG. 9 illustrates the results of the re-spun reels according to an embodiment of the invention. As shown, the second 705 and the fifth 720 reel now display the bonus symbol, in addition to the bonus symbols that are still displayed on the first 700 and the third

710 reels. According, a total of four bonus symbols are now displayed, and the bonus is triggered.

[0046] FIGS. 10 and 11 illustrate display screens of a secondary game, or a bonus game, according to an embodiment of the invention. Another benefit of enabling the “Hot Red Pennies” mode is that in the event that the player achieves the bonus-inducing combination, the player may be presented with a bonus game having enhanced or increased potential awards versus what would be available if the “Hot Red Pennies” mode had not been enabled.

[0047] As shown in FIG. 10, the player may be presented with a plurality of player-selectable elements 1000. In this case, the player is shown fifteen player-selectable elements (three on each of the five reels) and is instructed to select three of the player-selectable elements, each of which may hide an award. The player-selectable elements 1000 may be displayed as flames. The selections may be made by, e.g., pressing the touch screen 21.

[0048] FIG. 11 illustrates the results of the player’s three selections. As shown, the player selected two player-selectable elements 1100 and 1105, under which two “Hot Red Pennies” symbols were located. These “Hot Red Pennies” symbols may each represent ten free spins, or some other valuable award. The other selected player-selectable element 1110 was hiding two free spins for the player. In general, the “Hot Red Pennies” symbols award significantly more free spins than the selections that do not reveal Hot Red Pennies.

[0049] In other embodiments, the player selects player-selectable elements 1000 until a bonus game-ending element is selected. Additional embodiments allow the player to select more or fewer than three player-selectable elements 1000. The bonus game described above allows the player to accumulate a larger bonus than would be possible if the player had not enabled the “Hot Red Pennies” mode.

[0050] While the present invention has been described with reference to one or more particular embodiments, those skilled in the art will recognize that many changes may be made thereto without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. Each of these embodiments and obvious variations thereof is contemplated as falling within the spirit and scope of the claimed invention, which is set forth in the following claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A gaming terminal for playing a wagering game having a basic game and a bonus game, comprising:
 - a wager-input device;
 - a display for displaying a plurality of moveable reels having symbols located thereon during the basic game, the symbols indicating a randomly selected outcome selected from a plurality of outcomes, the basic game implementing a special mode in response to an enablement by a player; and
 - wherein in response to the special mode being enabled and the moveable reels displaying less than a full bonus-triggering symbol combination, the moveable reels not displaying a portion of the full bonus-triggering combination are re-spun.
2. The gaming terminal of claim 1, wherein the plurality of moveable reels includes mechanical reels.
3. The gaming terminal of claim 2, wherein the display includes a glass panel that is located directly in front of the moveable reels.
4. The gaming terminal of claim 1, wherein the plurality of moveable reels includes video reels.
5. The gaming terminal of claim 1, wherein the display includes at least one payline that traverses the plurality of moveable reels.
6. The gaming terminal of claim 1, wherein the special mode is enabled via an additional wager.
7. The gaming terminal of claim 1, wherein the at least one of the moveable reels displaying only the non-bonus triggering symbols are re-spun only when a predetermined number of the moveable reels display a bonus-triggering symbol after an initial spin.
8. The gaming terminal of claim 1, where the bonus game is triggered by a combination of bonus-triggering symbols, and a special bonus game screen is displayed only when the special mode has been enabled.
9. A method of conducting a wagering game, the method comprising:
 - receiving a wager from a player;
 - randomly selecting a game outcome from a plurality of outcomes in response to the wager;

displaying the game outcome for the wagering game as symbols on a plurality of symbol-bearing reels in alignment along at least one payline; and

enabling a special mode to re-spin the symbol-bearing reels not displaying a portion of a full bonus-triggering combination after an initial spin.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the special mode is enabled via an additional wager.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein the at least one of the symbol-bearing reels displaying only the non-bonus triggering symbols are re-spun only when a predetermined number of the symbol-bearing reels display a bonus-triggering symbol after the initial spin.

12. The method of claim 9, where a bonus is triggered by a combination of bonus-triggering symbols, and a special bonus game screen is displayed only when the special mode has been enabled.

13. A gaming terminal for playing a wagering game, comprising:

at least one display; and

a controller coupled to the display and programmed to

move symbols on a plurality of moveable reels across the display to indicate an outcome of a plurality of outcomes during an initial spin,

enabling a special mode to re-spin the moveable reels not displaying a portion of a full bonus-triggering combination after the initial spin.

14. The gaming terminal of claim 13, wherein the controller enables the special mode in response to an additional wager made via a wager input device.

15. The gaming terminal of claim 13, wherein the at least one of the moveable reels displaying only the non-bonus triggering symbols are re-spun only when a predetermined number one of the moveable reels display a bonus-triggering symbol after the initial spin.

16. The gaming terminal of claim 13, wherein the controller is located within the gaming terminal.

17. The gaming terminal of claim 13, wherein the controller is located outside of the gaming terminal.

18. The gaming terminal of claim 13, where a bonus is triggered by a combination of bonus-triggering symbols, and a special bonus game screen is displayed only when the special mode has been enabled.

19. A gaming terminal for playing a wagering game having a basic game and a bonus game, comprising:

a wager-input device;

a display for displaying the basic game and the bonus game and implementing a special mode in response to an enablement by a player; and

wherein in response to the special mode being enabled and the occurrence of a bonus-triggering event during the basic game, a special bonus game segment of the bonus game provides enhanced bonus awards.

20. The gaming terminal of claim 19, wherein the enhanced bonus awards are larger than a bonus award available when the special mode has not been enabled.

21. The gaming terminal of claim 19, wherein the special mode is enabled via an additional wager.

22. The gaming terminal of claim 19, wherein the player is prompted to select at least one of the player-selectable elements.

23. The gaming terminal of claim 22, wherein the player is prompted to continue selecting the player-selectable elements until a bonus-game-ending element is selected.

24. The gaming terminal of claim 19, wherein a plurality of selectable elements associated with the enhanced bonus awards are displayed during the bonus game segment.

25. A method of conducting a wagering game having a basic game and a bonus game, comprising:

receiving a wager from a player;

displaying the basic game and the bonus game;

enabling a special mode to display a special bonus game segment of the bonus game upon the occurrence of a bonus-triggering event during the basic game, wherein the special bonus game segment provides enhanced bonus awards.

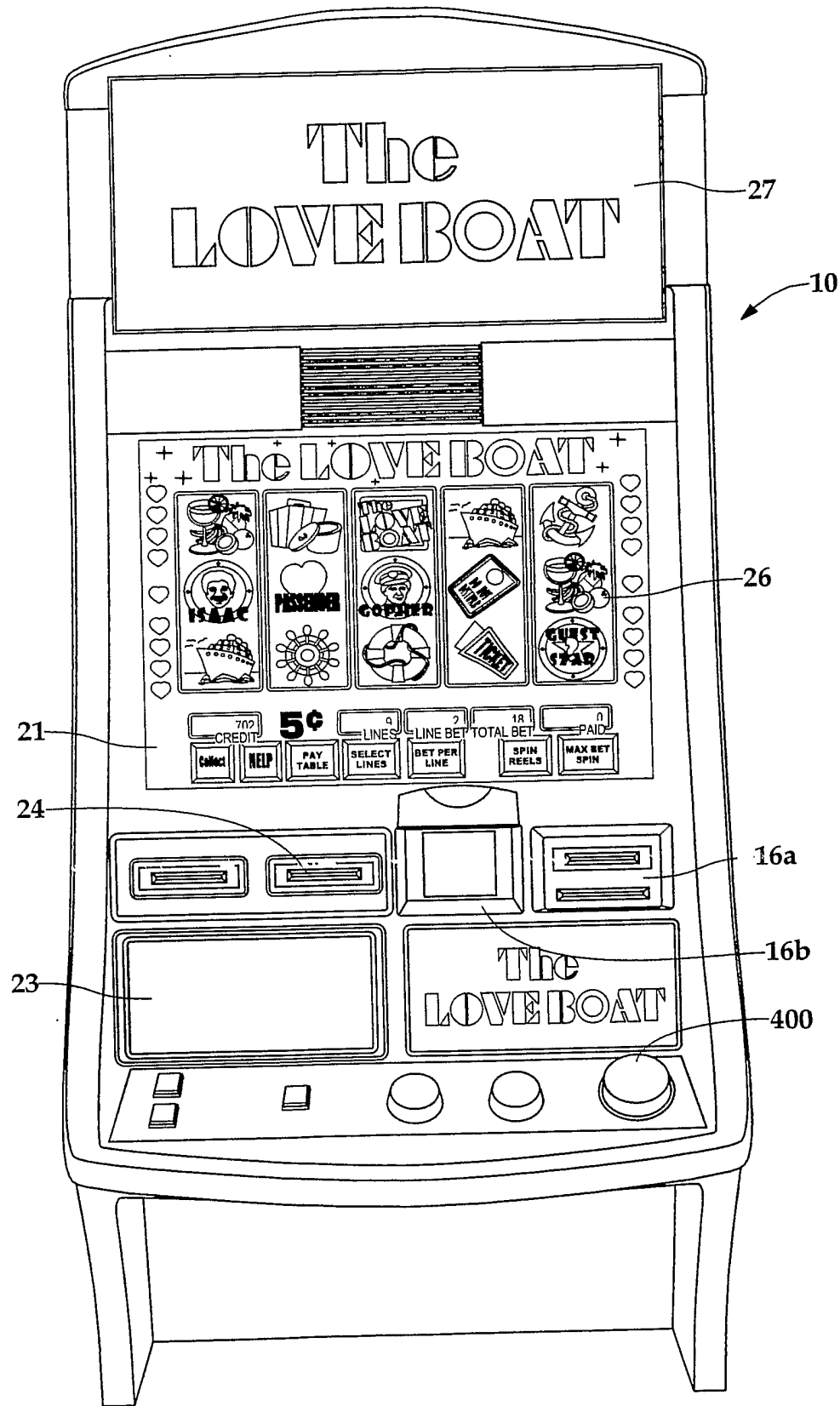
26. The method of claim 25, wherein the enhanced bonus awards are larger than a bonus award available when the special mode has not been enabled.

27. The method of claim 25, wherein the special mode is enabled via an additional wager.

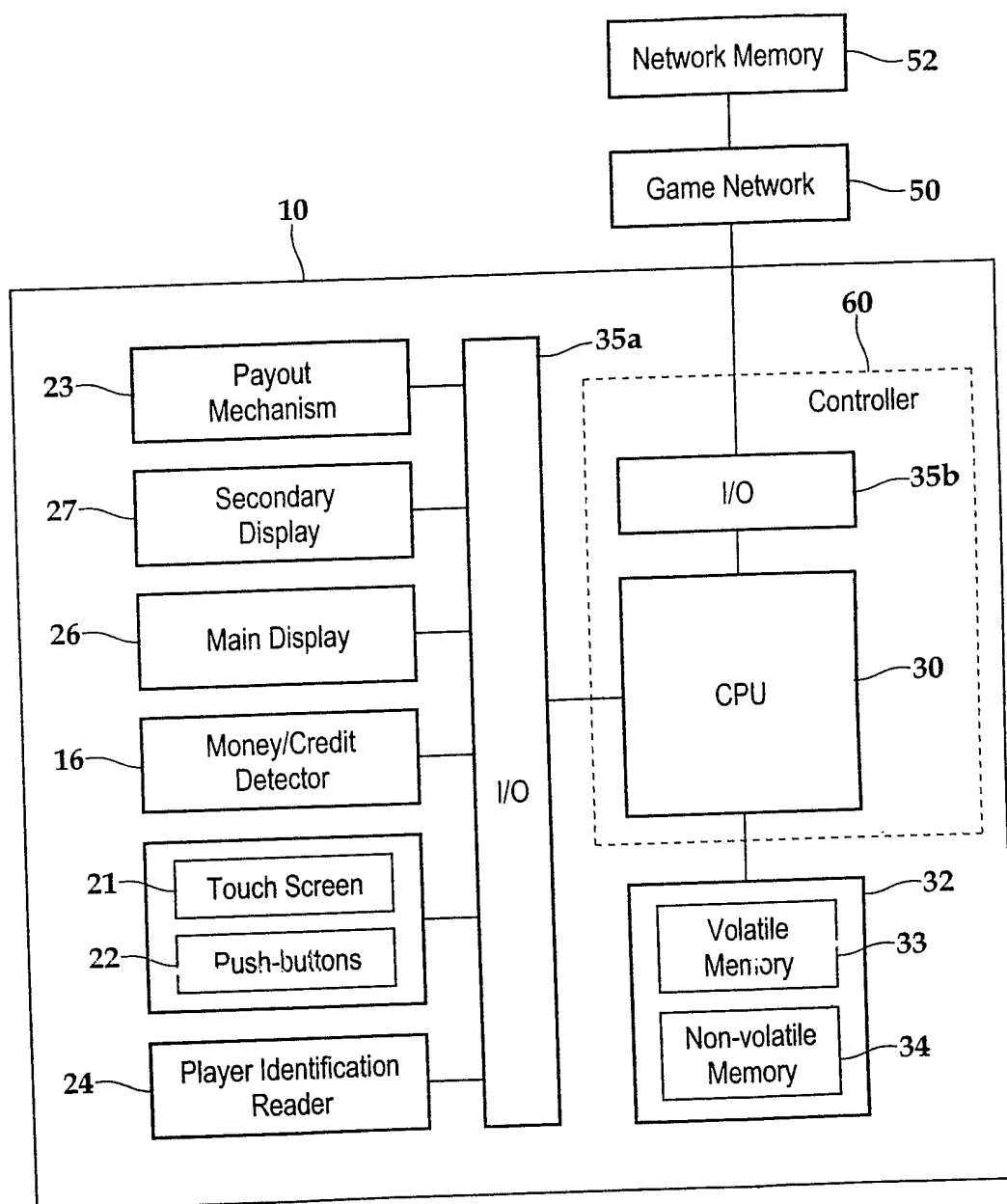
28. The method of claim 25, further including prompting the player to select at least one of the player-selectable elements.

29. The method of claim 28, further including prompting the player to select the player-selectable elements until a bonus-game-ending element is selected.

30. The method of claim 25, further including displaying a plurality of selectable elements associated with the enhanced bonus awards during the bonus game segment.



2/7

*Fig.2*

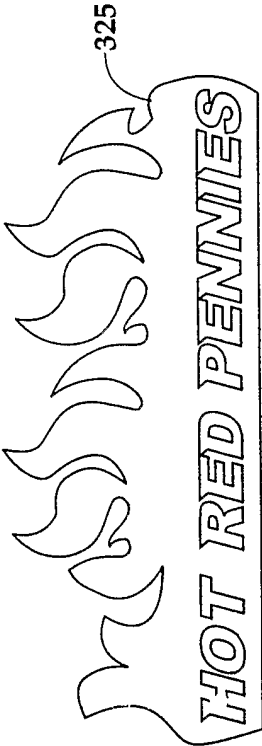
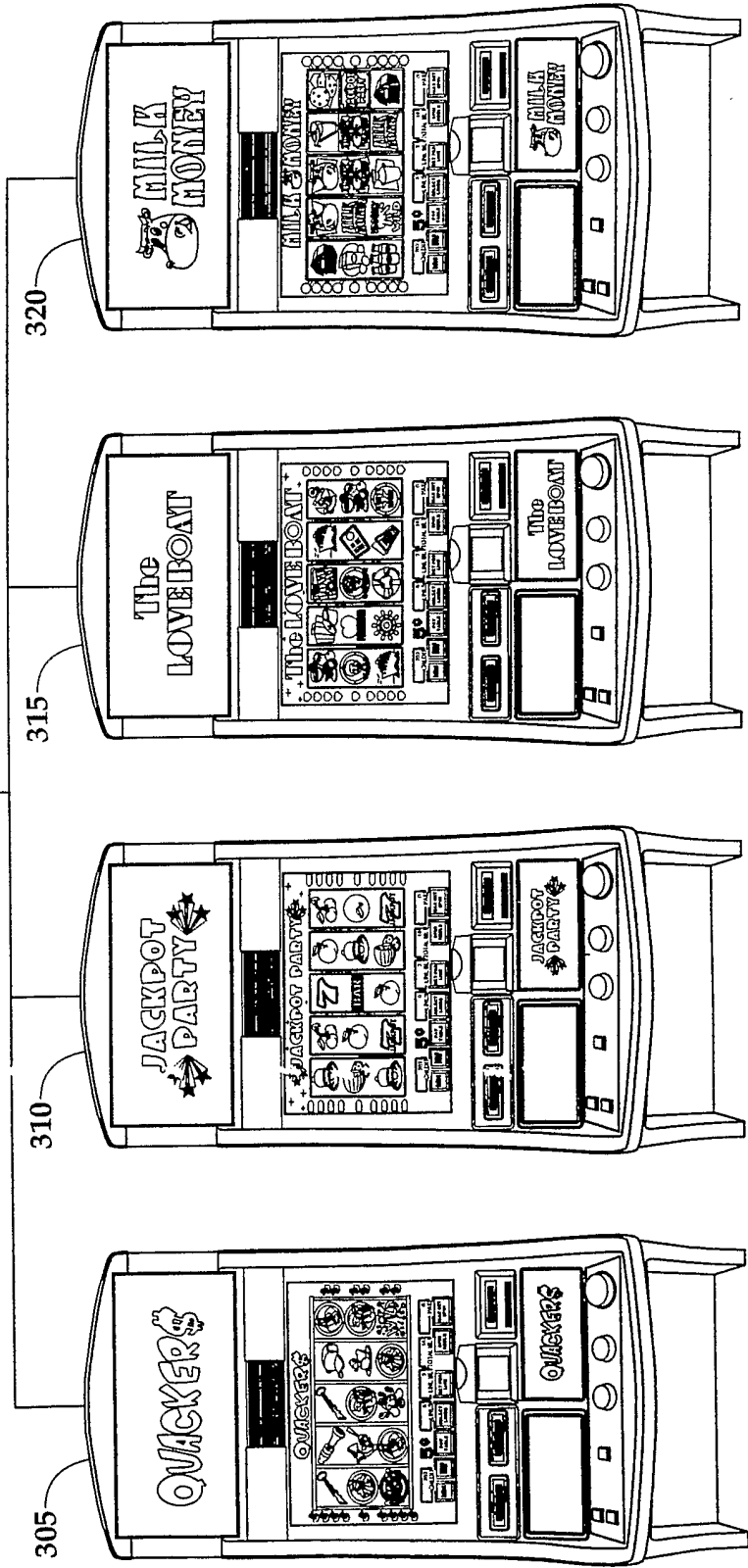


Fig.3



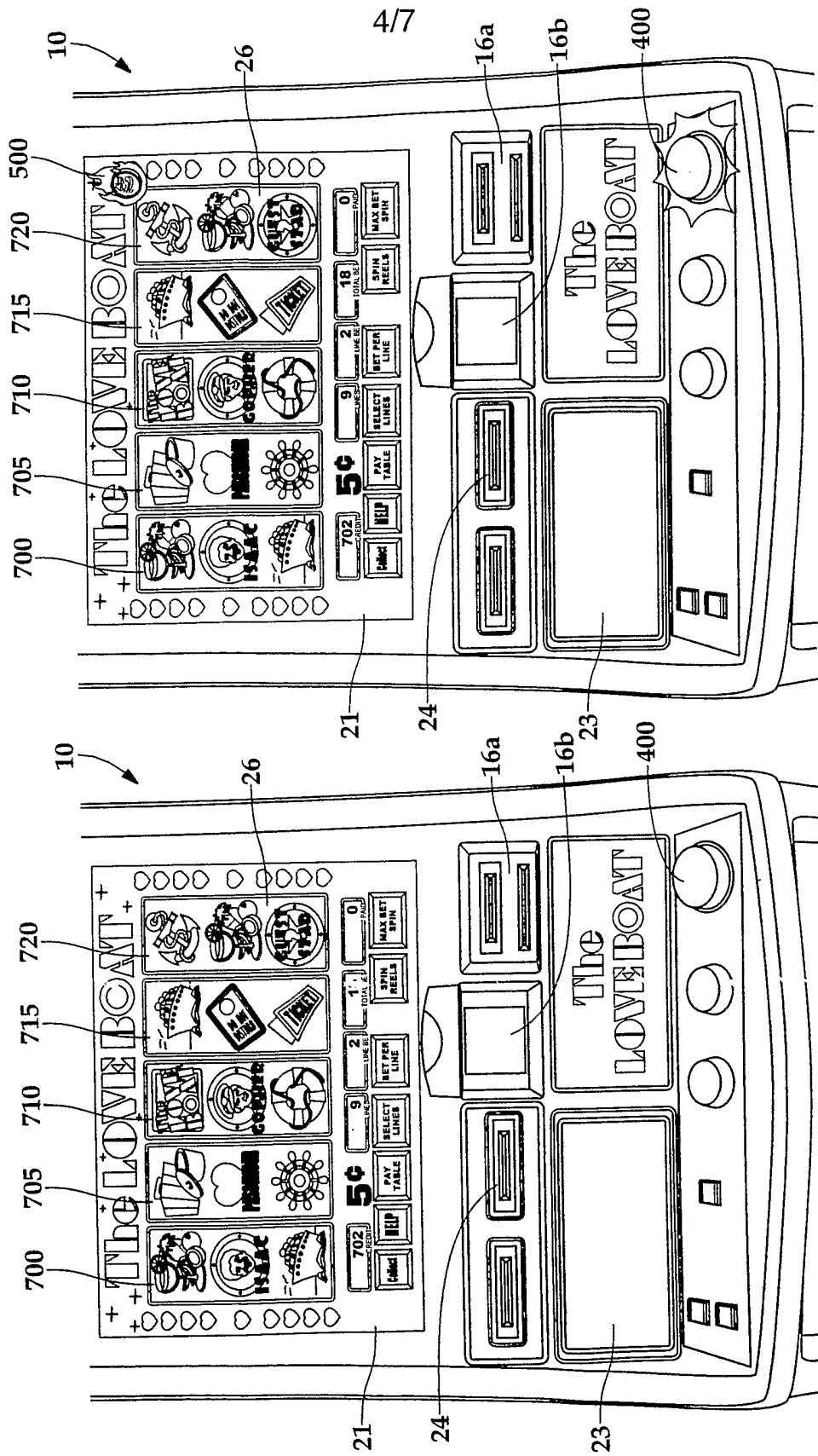


Fig.5

Fig.4

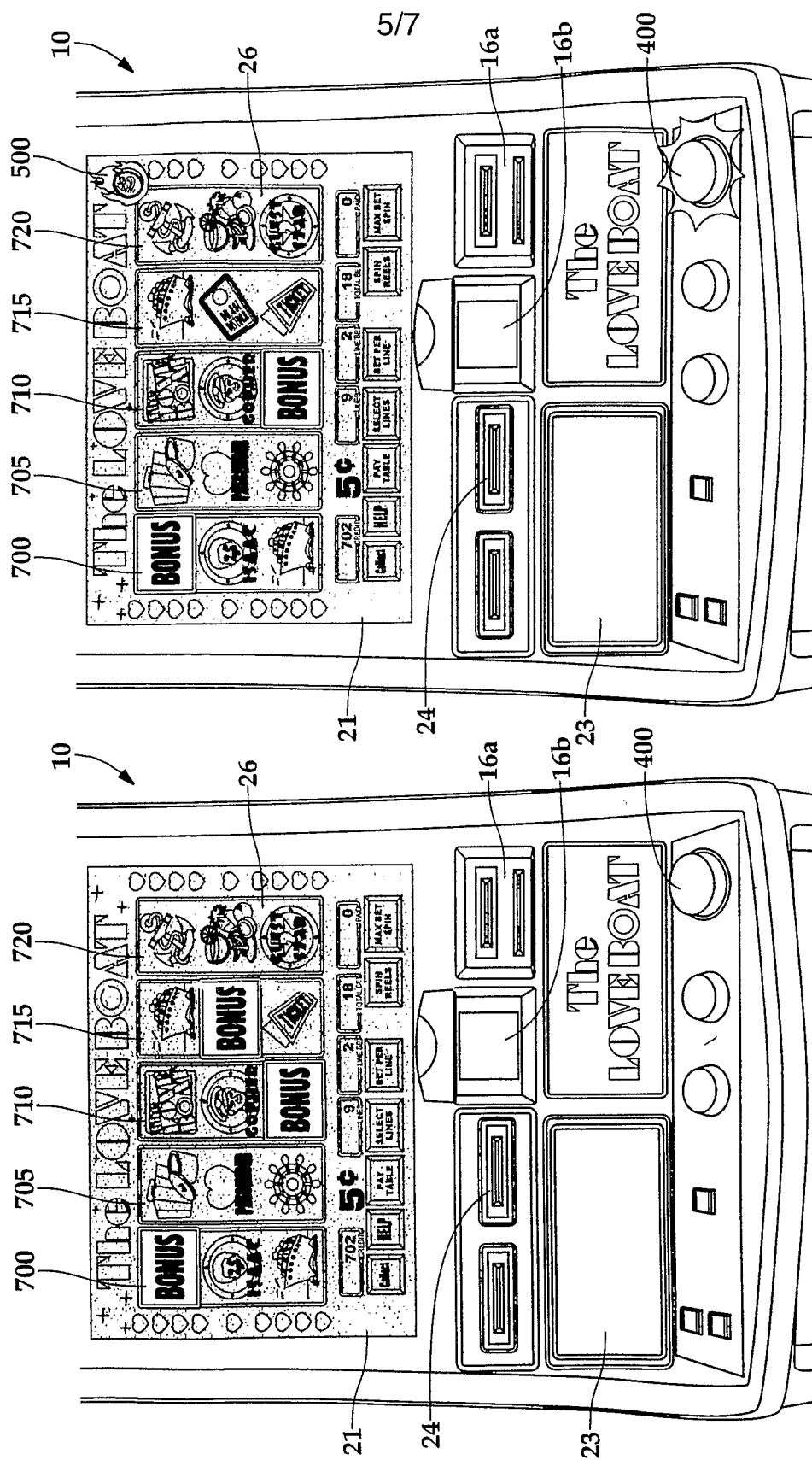


Fig. 7

Fig. 6

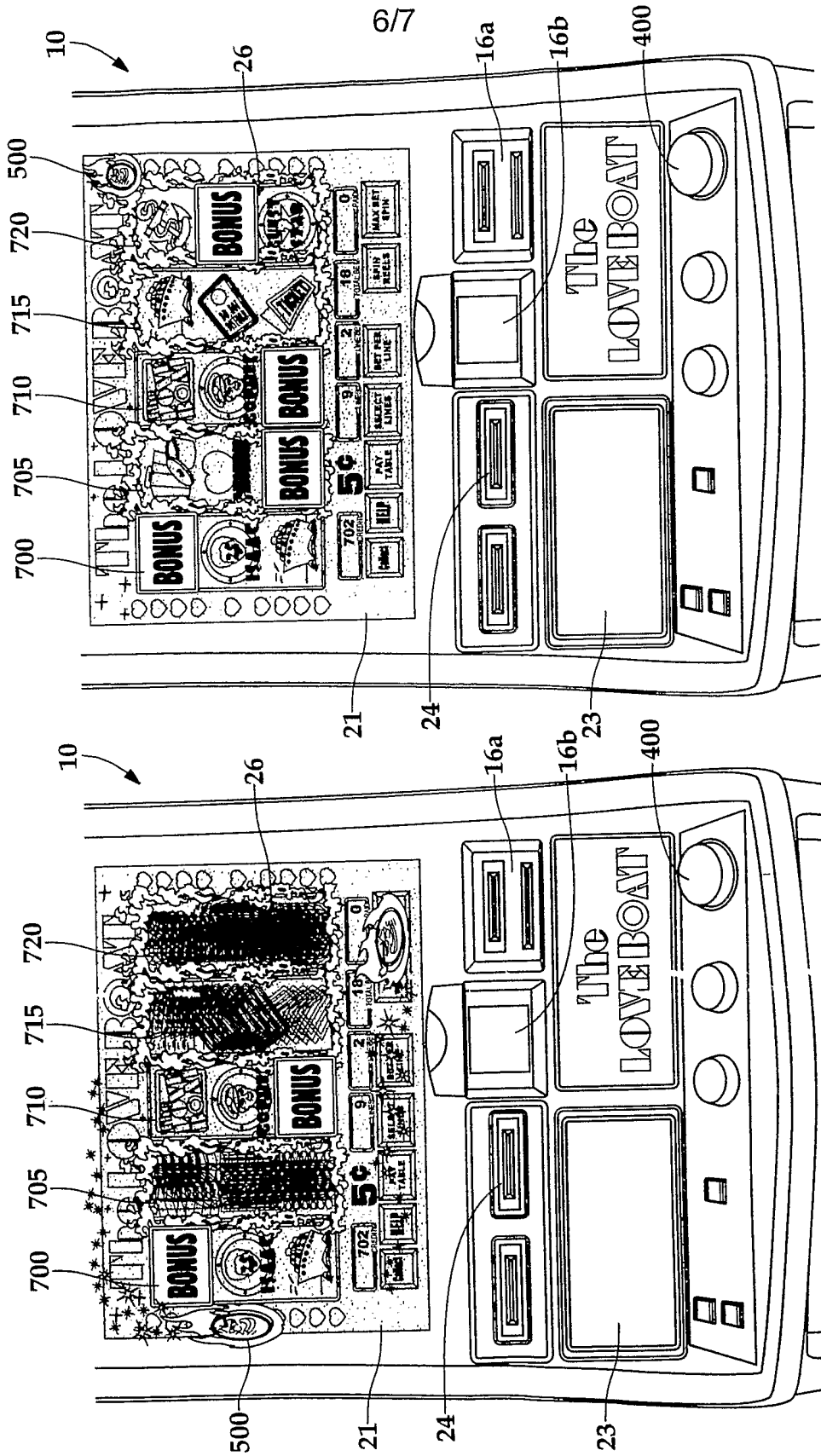


Fig.9

Fig.8

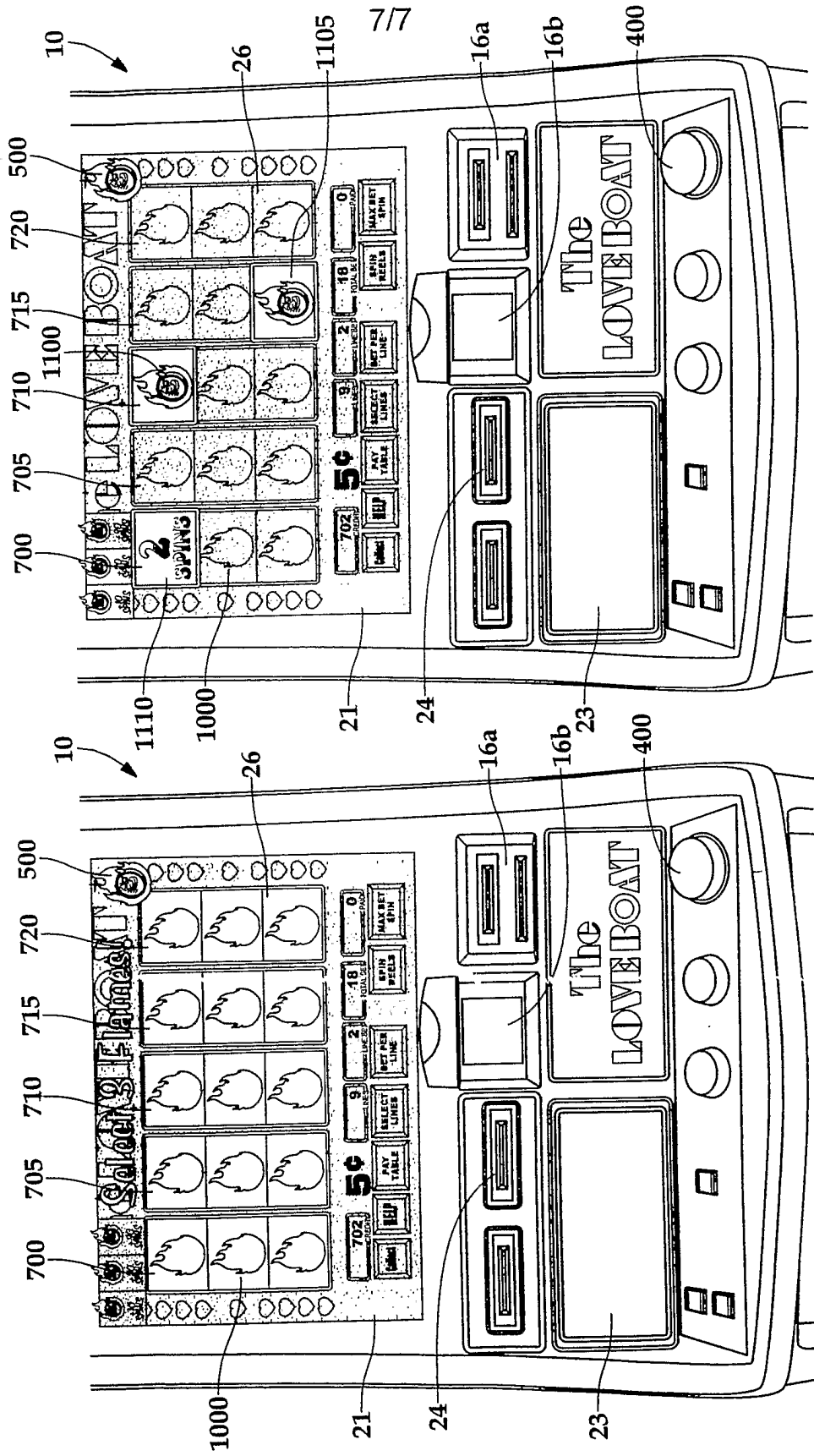


Fig.11

Fig.10