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(54) **CHI-BUILDER**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

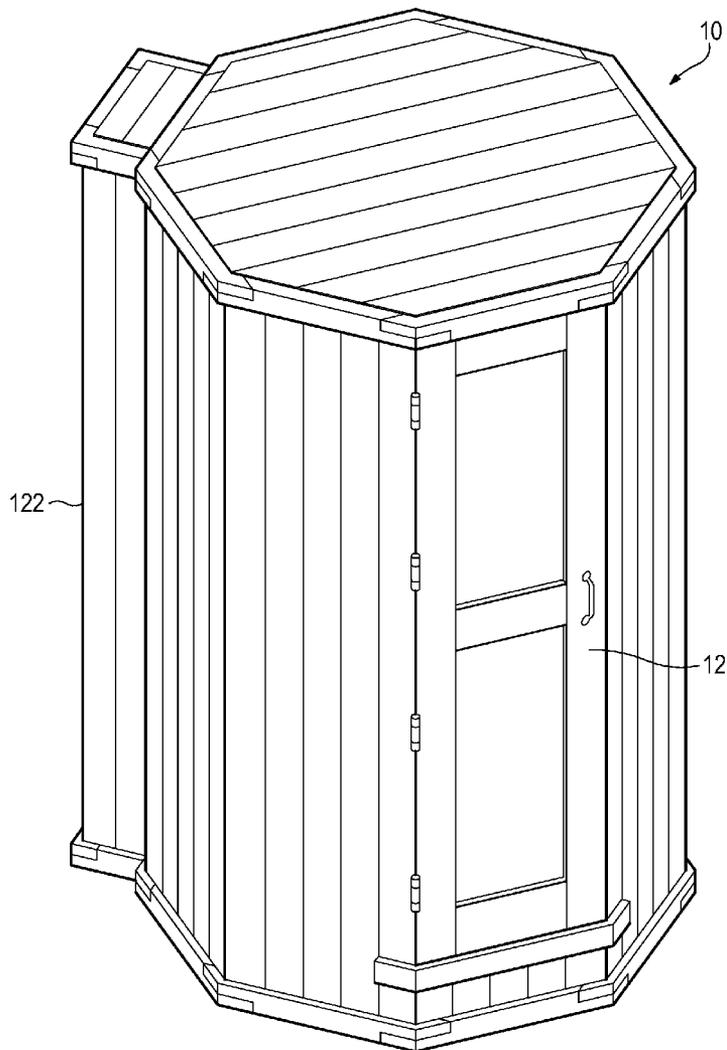
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A structure has eight walls forming an octagonal structure, wherein the walls are arranged to be self-supporting without the use of external fasteners, each wall having an internal face, a least one heat source arranged to provide heat to the structure as desired, a roof having an octagonal shape, the roof attaching to the walls without the use of external fasteners, and an enclosure formed from the walls and roof. A structure having at least three walls, wherein the walls are arranged to be self-supporting without the use of external fasteners, each wall having an internal face, a roof, the roof attaching to the walls without the use of external fasteners, and an enclosure formed from the walls and roof, wherein the walls and roof are manufactured only of natural materials.

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**Related U.S. Application Data**

(60) Provisional application No. 61/156,412, filed on Feb. 27, 2009, provisional application No. 61/235,604, filed on Aug. 20, 2009.



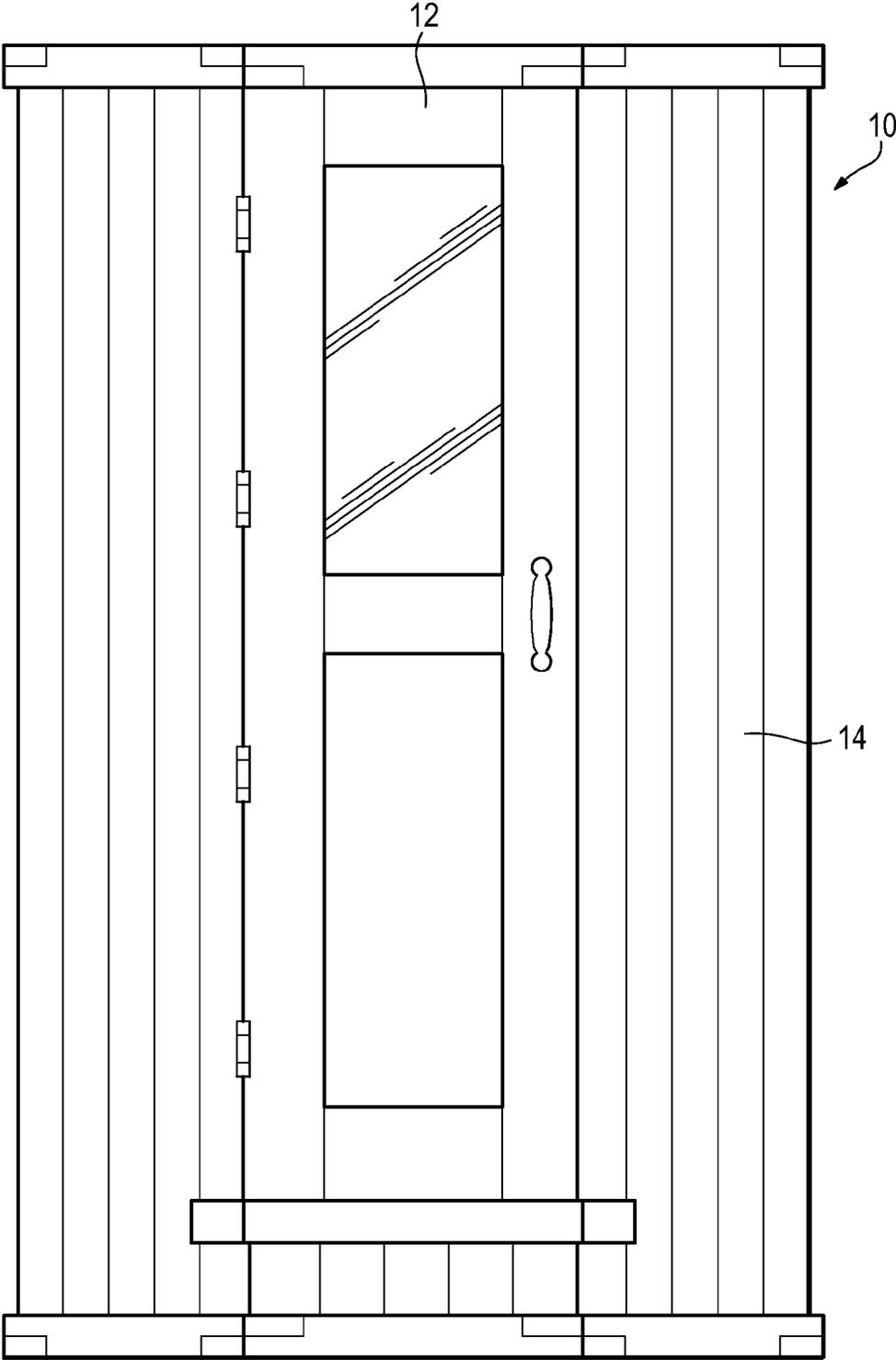


FIG. 1

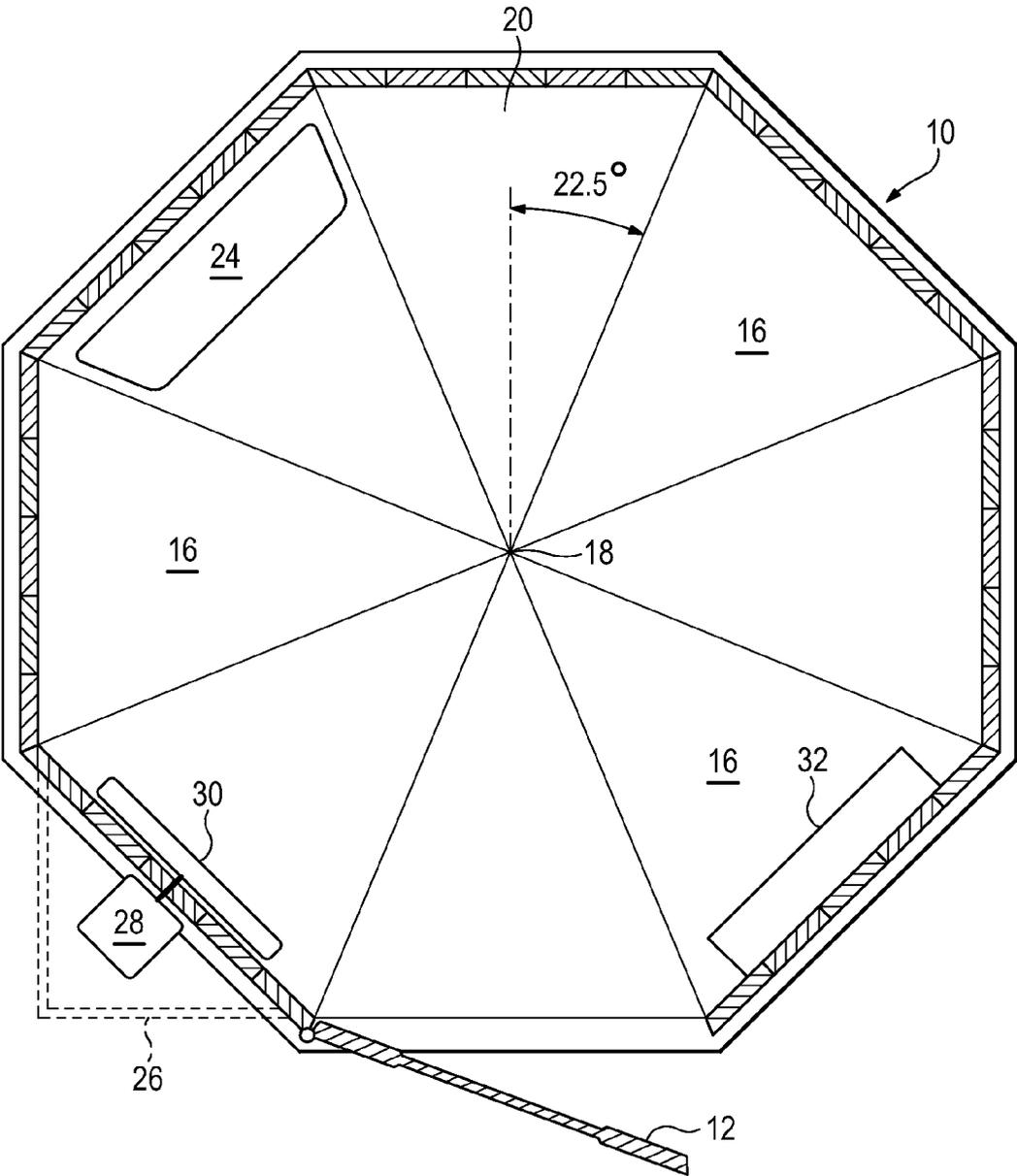


FIG. 2

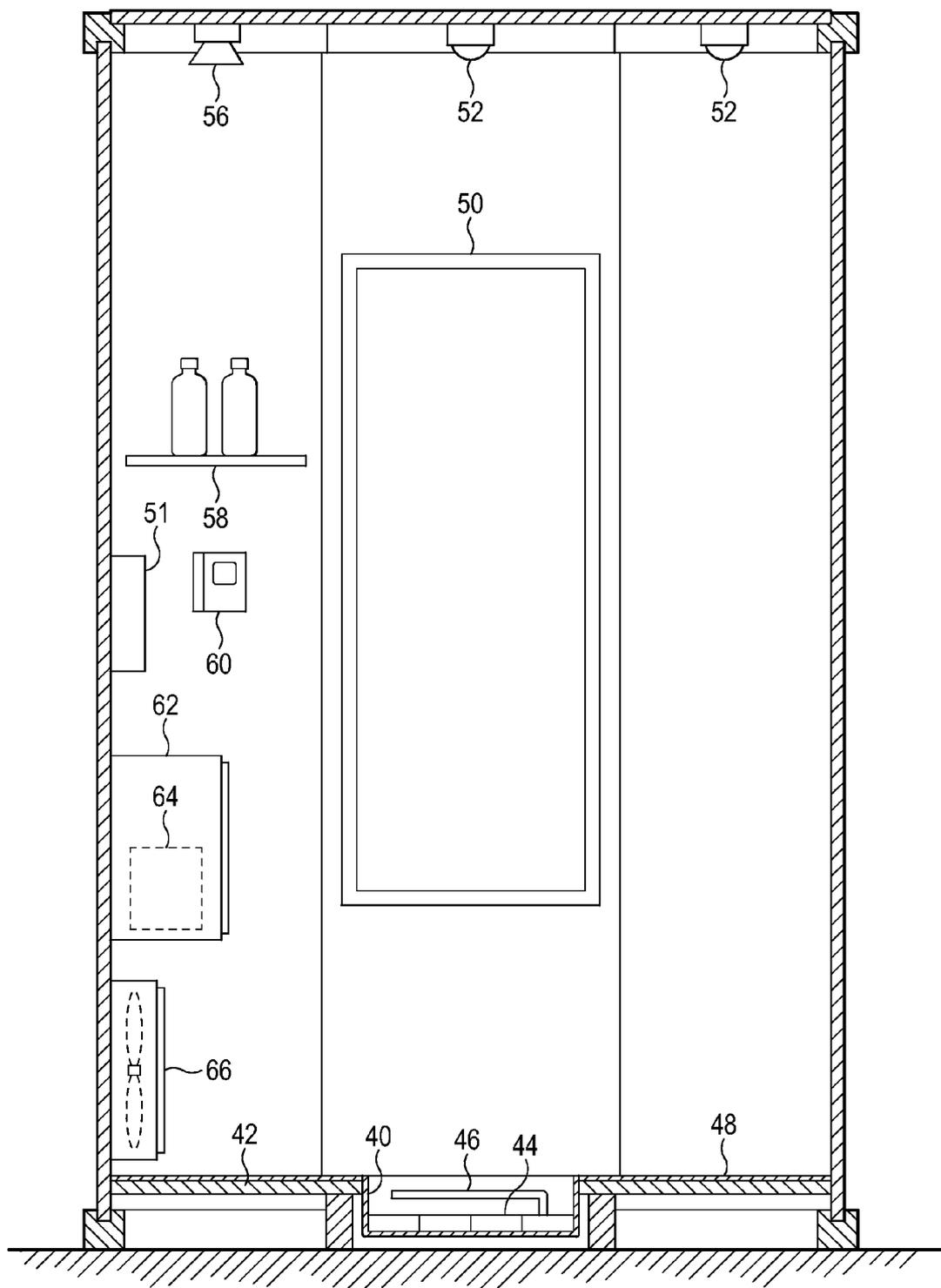


FIG.3

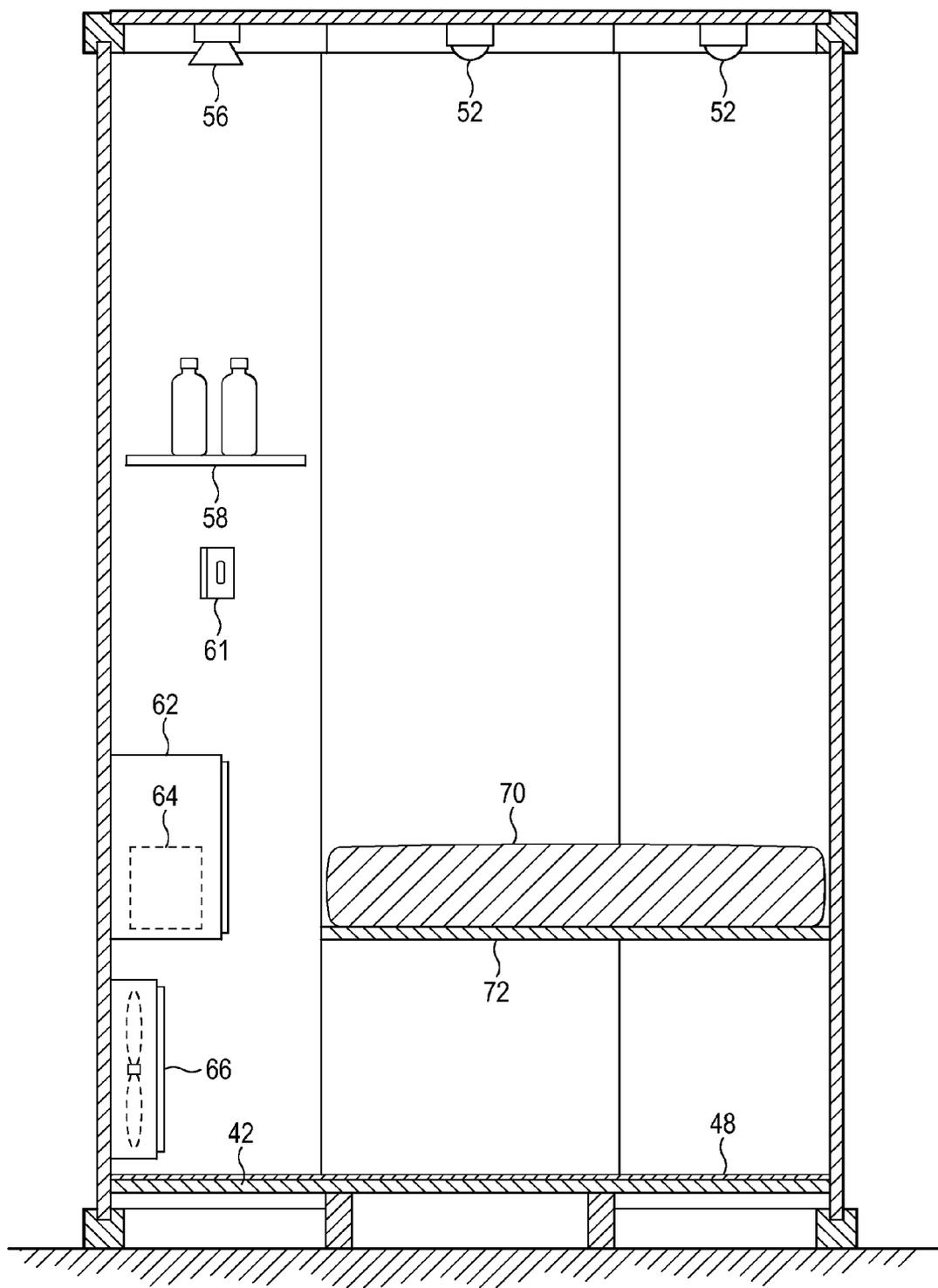
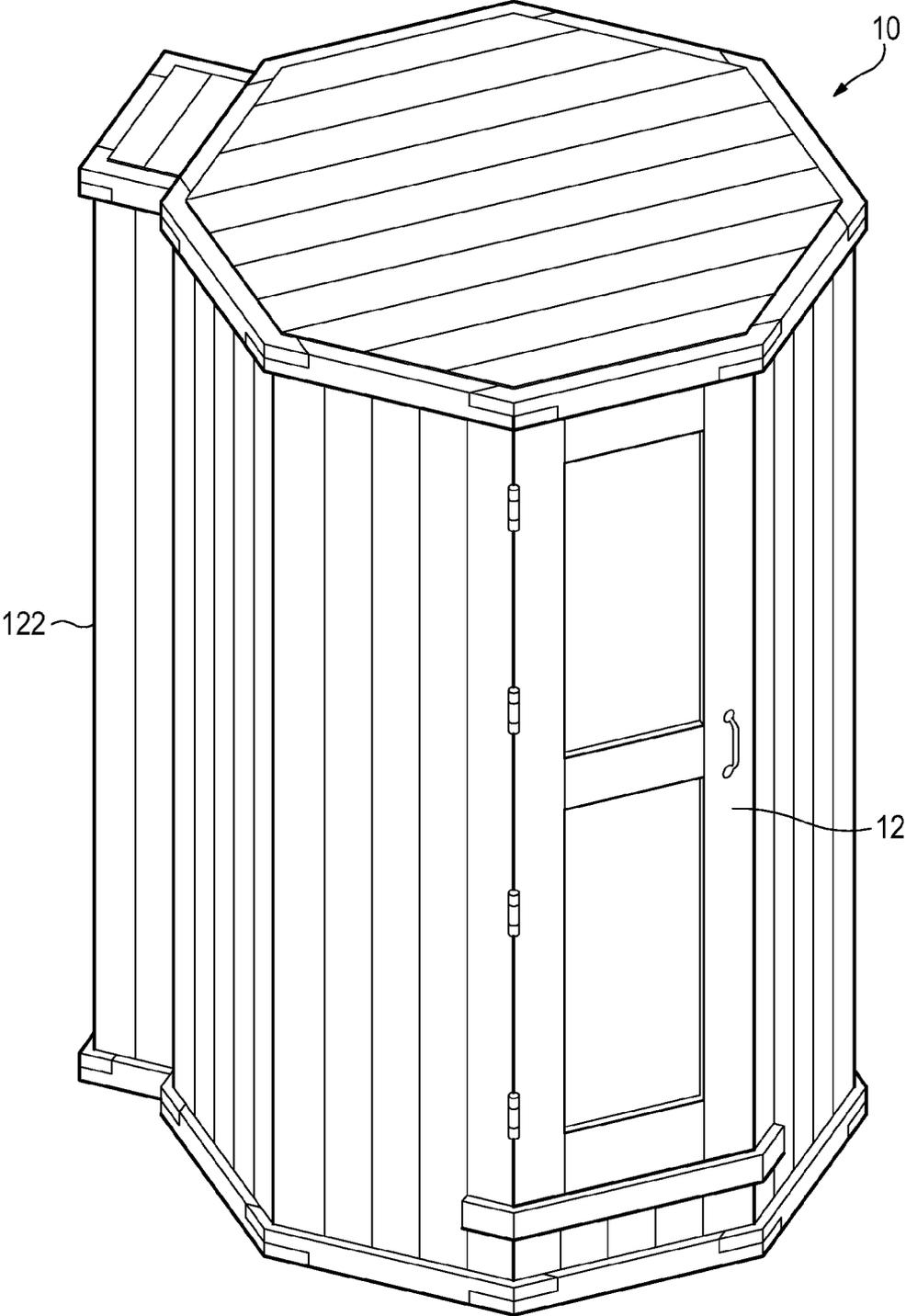


FIG.4



**FIG.5**

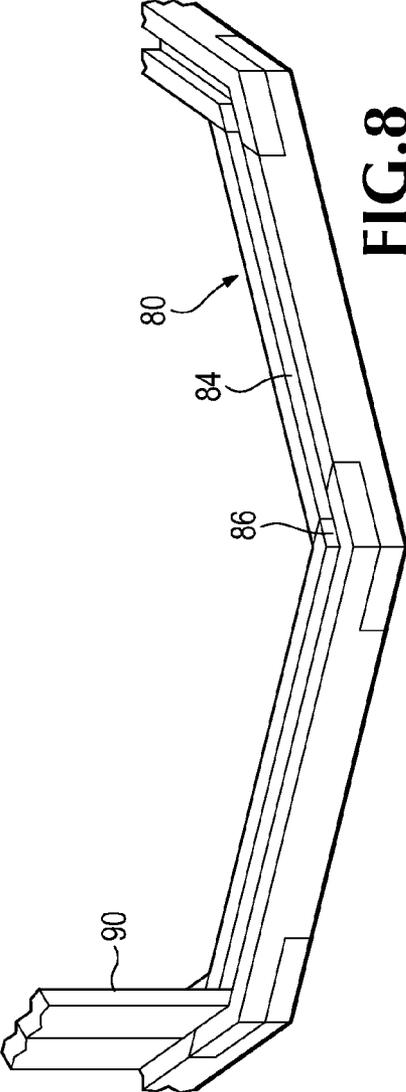
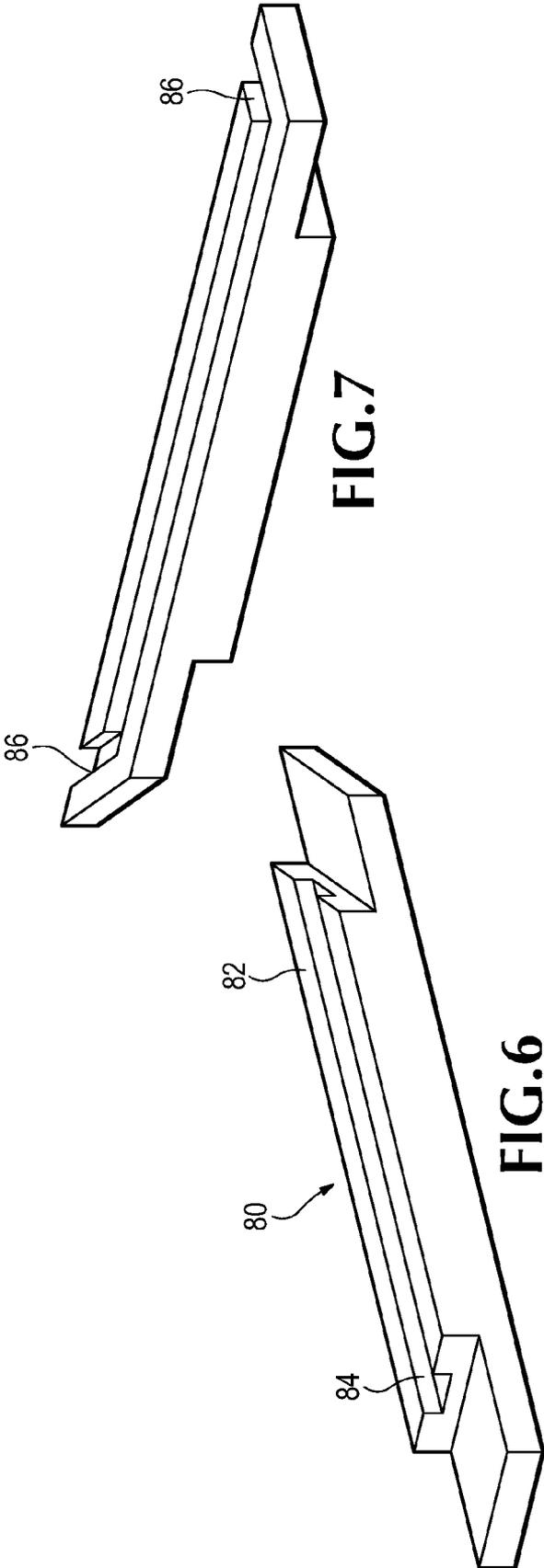
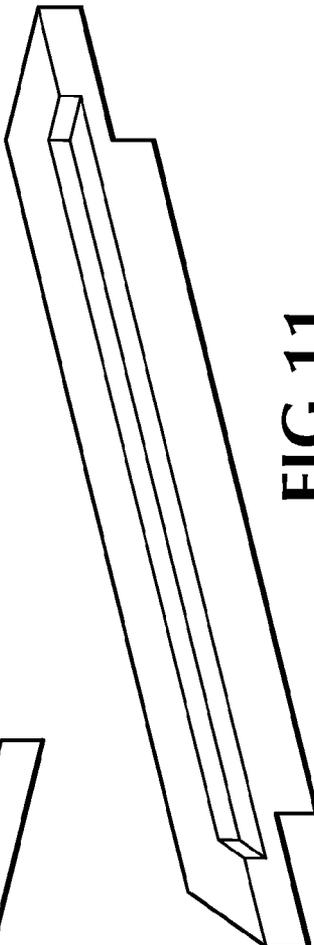
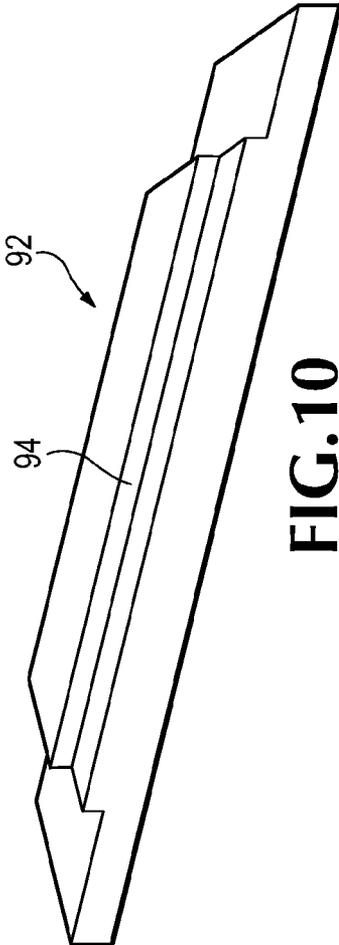
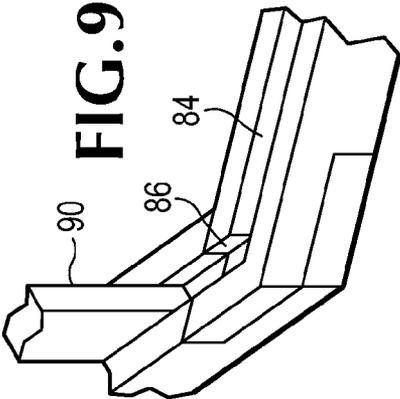
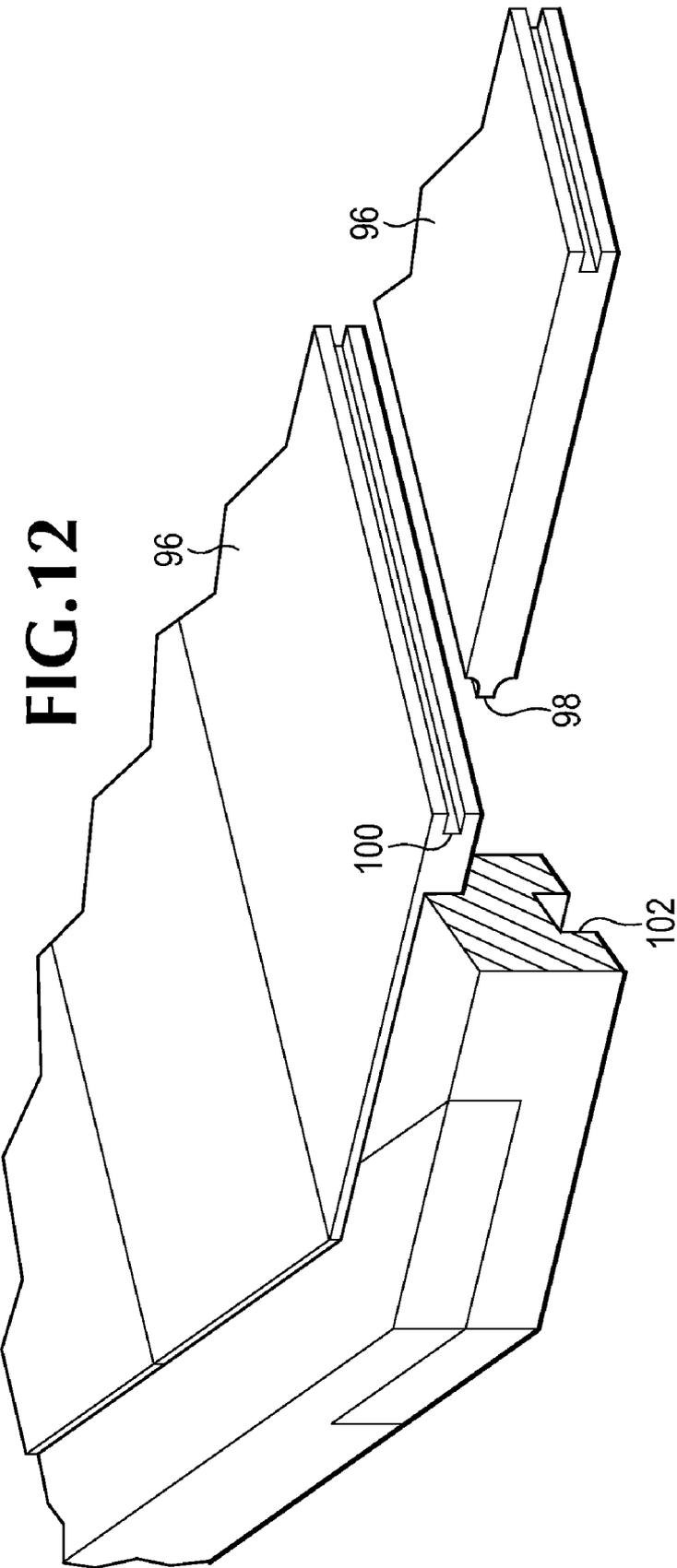


FIG. 8

FIG. 6

FIG. 7





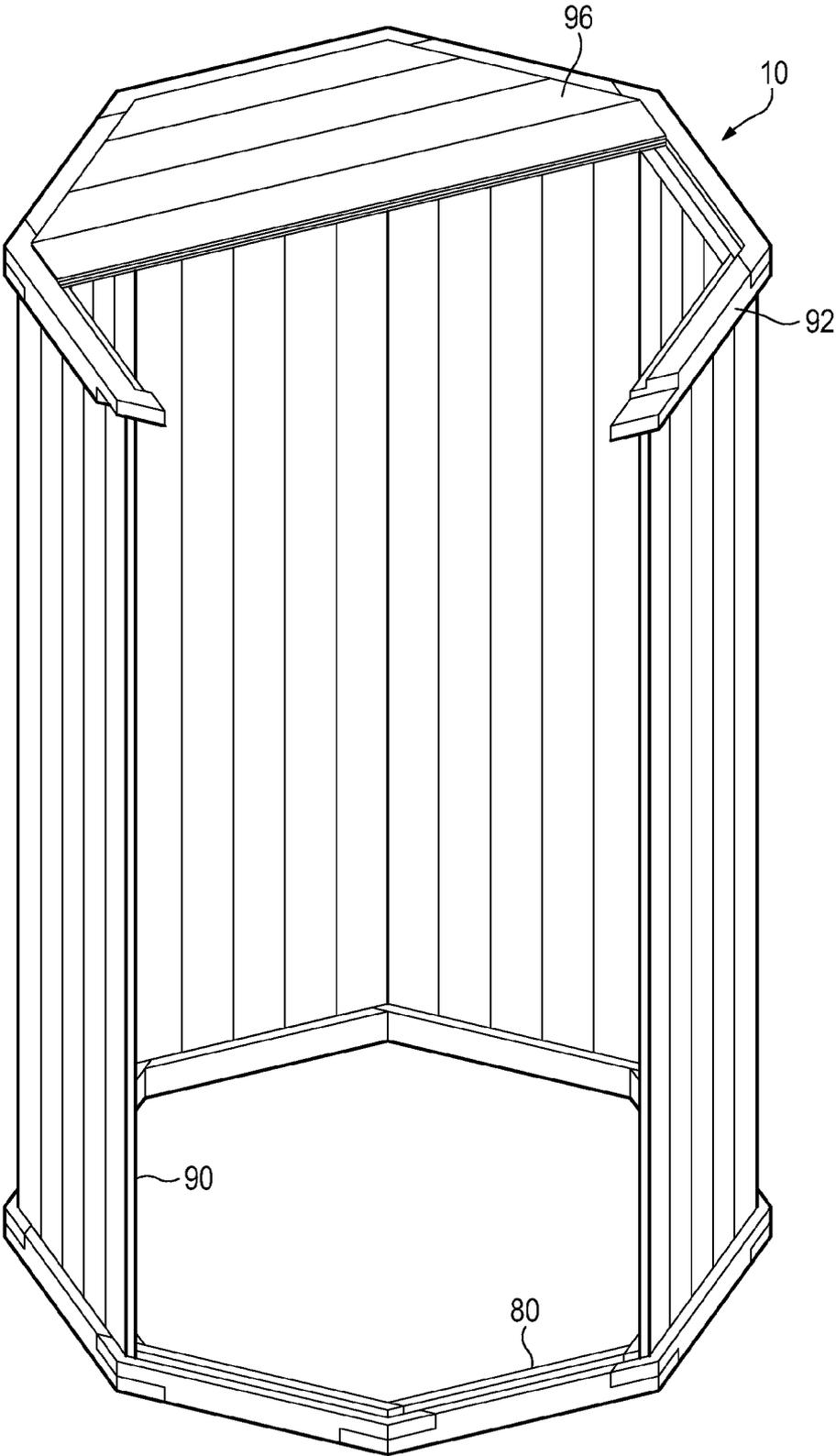
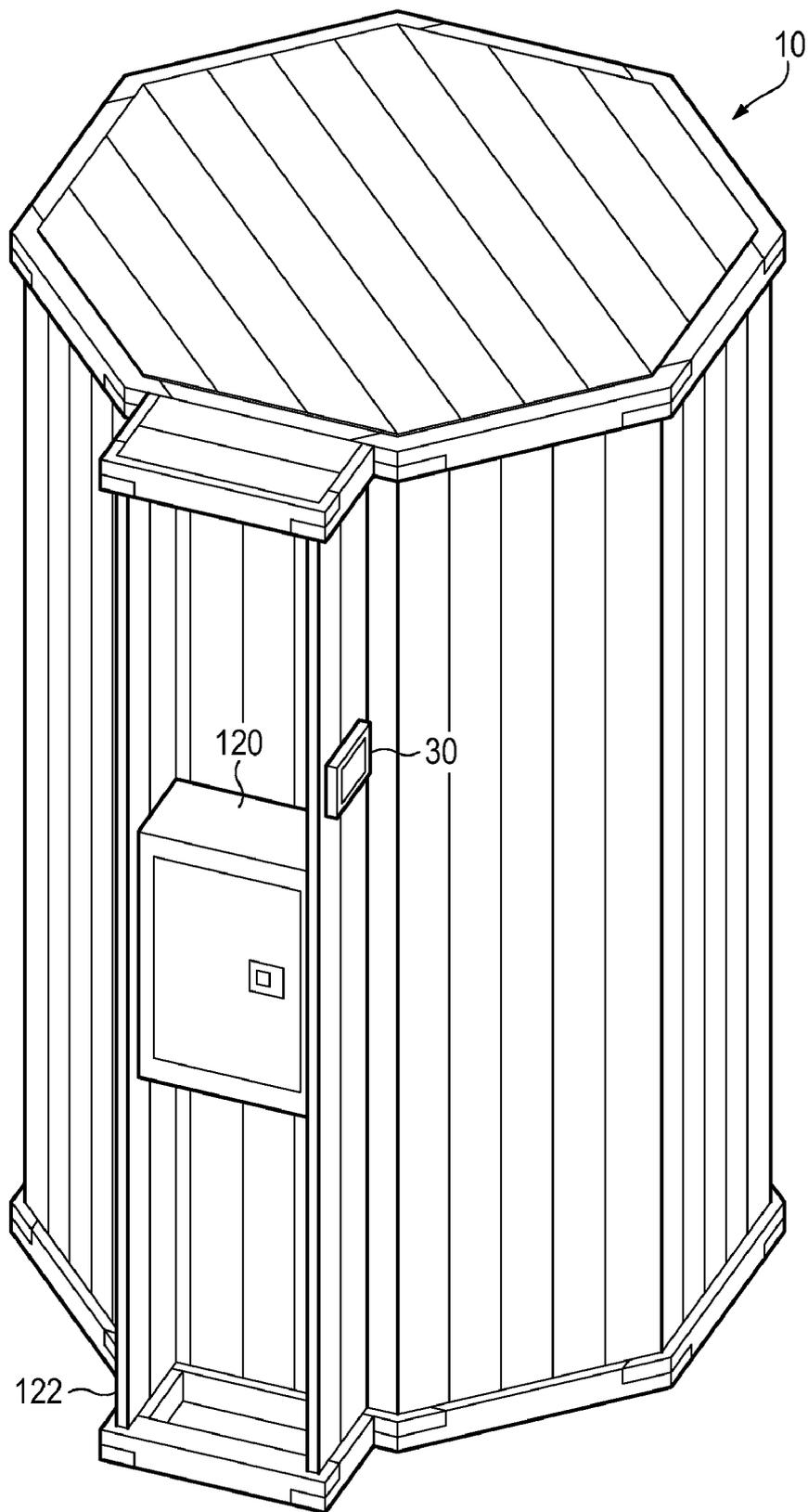
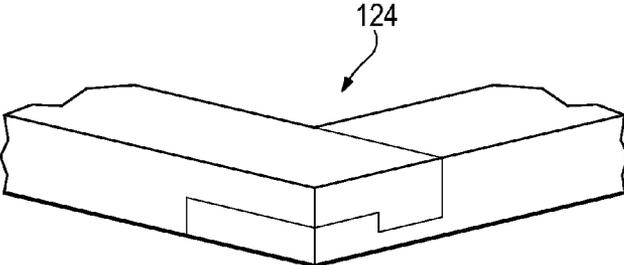


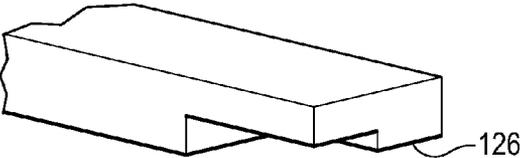
FIG. 13



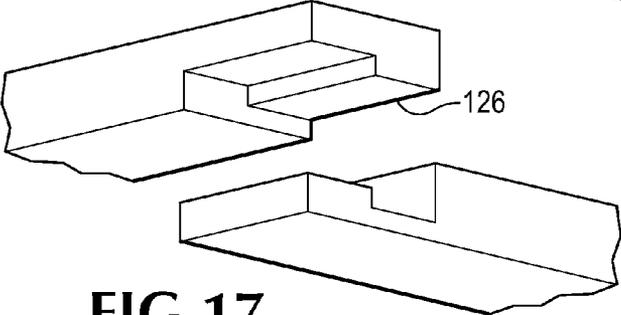
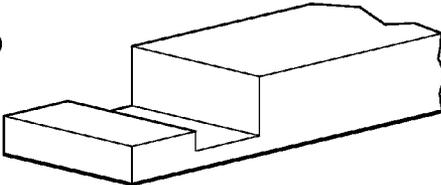
**FIG. 14**



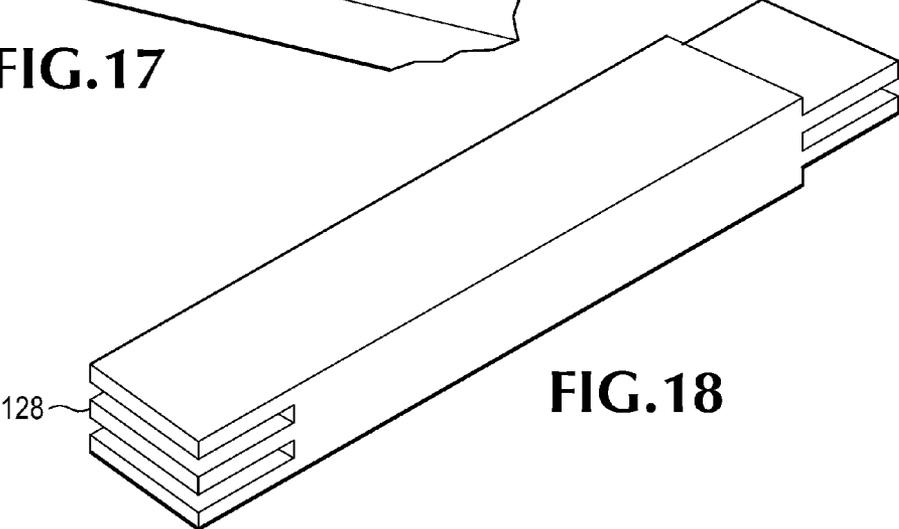
**FIG. 15**



**FIG. 16**



**FIG. 17**



**FIG. 18**

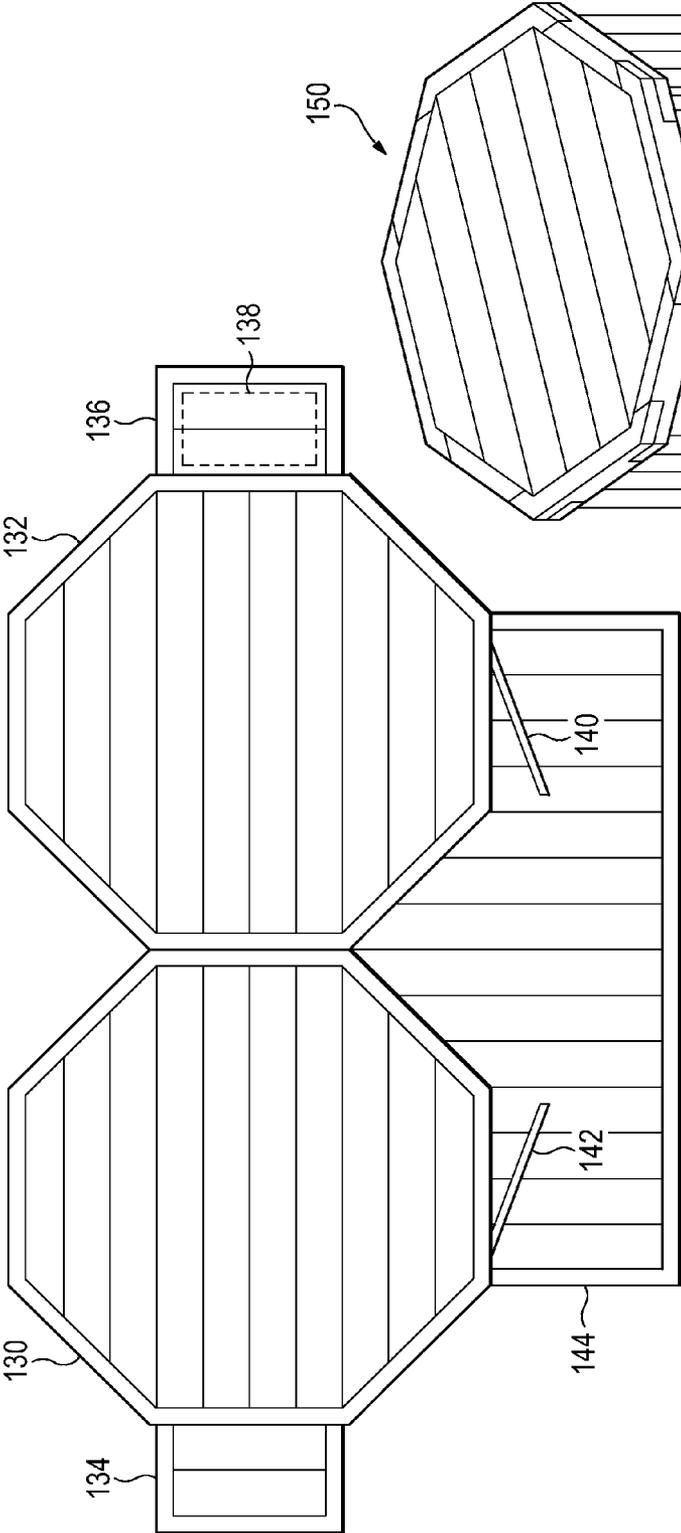


FIG. 19

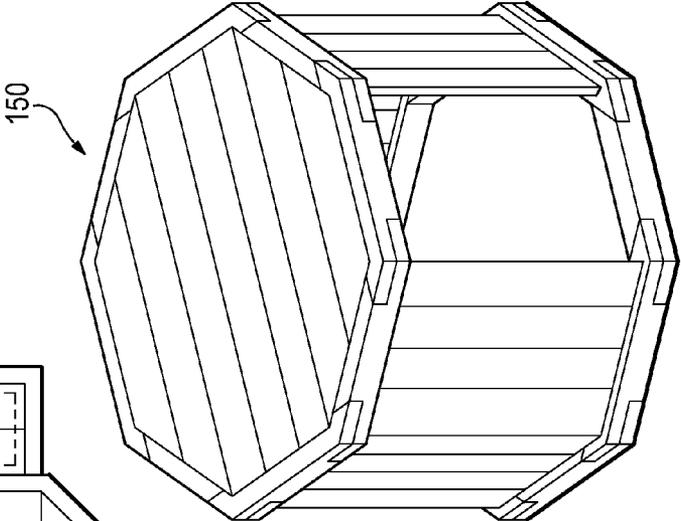


FIG. 20

**CHI-BUILDER**

## RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation of and claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/156,412, filed Feb. 27, 2009, and U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/235,604, filed Aug. 20, 2009.

## BACKGROUND

[0002] In Chinese, the word 'chi' or 'qi' means air or energy. 'Gong' generally translates to work, so the term 'chi-gong' or 'qigong' is generally understood to mean 'energy work' or 'energy practice.' Many different disciplines from martial arts to healing arts have arisen around the concepts of chi.

[0003] Holistic or integrated approaches to health and well-being generally include aspects of physical, mental and spiritual health. As chi is involved in these aspects, building good health and strong chi are interrelated. The realization of these interconnections can be seen in the rise of various forms of chi-gong practices, the increasing interest and participation in such activities as yoga, and even in the increasing acceptance of feng-shui, the application of various concepts to help one receive positive chi.

[0004] The ability to build good health and strong chi is desirable, and having a place in which to do so would be helpful. Currently, people can attend yoga sessions as yoga studios and gyms, including 'hotbox' studios, participate in chi-gong groups and exercises, etc. Generally, however, chi-oriented buildings and structures are not available.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] FIG. 1 shows a front view of an embodiment of a chi-oriented structure.

[0006] FIG. 2 shows a top view of an embodiment of a chi-oriented structure.

[0007] FIG. 3 shows an inside view of an embodiment of a chi-oriented studio.

[0008] FIG. 4 shows an inside view of an embodiment of a chi-oriented SLEEPING CABIN™.

[0009] FIG. 5 shows one embodiment of a completed chi-oriented structure.

[0010] FIG. 6 shows an embodiment of a frame joint.

[0011] FIG. 7 shows an embodiment of a frame joint.

[0012] FIG. 8 shows an embodiment of a frame bottom.

[0013] FIG. 9 shows an embodiment of a frame bottom with a joint and side wall.

[0014] FIGS. 10-11 show an embodiment of a roof joint.

[0015] FIG. 12 shows an embodiment of a top joint and a portion of a roof.

[0016] FIG. 13 shows a partially completed embodiment of a chi-oriented structure.

[0017] FIG. 14 shows an embodiment of a modular control cabinet.

[0018] FIGS. 15-17 show views of an alternative joint.

[0019] FIG. 18 shows an embodiment of a double-tongued joint.

[0020] FIG. 19 shows an embodiment of two chi-oriented structures.

[0021] FIG. 20 shows an embodiment of a chi-oriented structure for pets.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

[0022] FIG. 1 shows a front view of an entrance to a chi-oriented structure 10. A 'chi-oriented' structure as used here is a structure that uses the principles of chi, such as Feng Shui, Chi-Gong, the 5 elements, the 4 pillars of Chinese astrology, alone or in combination, as an integral aspect of the structure itself. The structure forms an enclosure, which may also be referred to as a 'room' or an environment.

[0023] Generally, the height can be selected as desired for the user, the example shown is for a structure that could be anywhere from 6 to 12 feet. The structure would generally be accessible from a door 12 that opens outwards, so as to allow for maximum space in the interior. Further, the structure will generally be constructed in an octagonal or round shape, but any shape such as rectangular, square, pyramidal, may be used. The example used here is an octagonal structure, of 8 faces, the face 14 shown here would generally face north.

[0024] The structure itself may be manufactured out of all natural materials, so as to avoid any toxicity in the environment of the interior of the structure. As will be discussed with regard to FIGS. 5-12, it is possible to construct such a structure without using any glue, nails or other types of materials, referred to here as 'fastening materials,' or 'fasteners.' Fasteners may be used to strengthen the structure, or for attachment of electronics, wiring, etc. However, the structural elements, mainly the walls and roof with an optional floor or entry way, can connect together and stand without the use of any fastening materials, being self-supporting. As will be discussed in more detail further, the tongue-in-groove examples may be considered to be 'fasteners.' In order to prevent any confusion, the fasteners or fastening materials, such as glue, nails, screws, etc., may be referred to as external fasteners.

[0025] In some embodiments, involving more active use, the structure may be reinforced using fasteners, such as screws, bolts, hinges, etc., or alternatively, to allow the use of natural materials, wooden dowels. The structure itself may be manufactured from cedar, redwood, or some other type of wood or even stone. The structure could be set up indoors or outdoors.

[0026] FIG. 2 shows a top view of an octagonal embodiment of a chi-oriented structure. The structure 10 has 8 faces. The faces are each oriented to one of the main directions of north, northwest, west, southwest, south, southeast, east, and northeast. The inside of the structure, while not physically divided up with barriers, may be thought of as comprising 8 portents, such as 16, each radiating out of a structure center 18. Each portent, such as 20, has a center line facing the main direction, with the corners of the face being 22.5 degrees off the center line on either side.

[0027] In some embodiments of the chi-oriented structure, the portents may be labeled so as to assist users in orienting themselves along the proper chi meridian or energy channel. A portable bench 24 may reside inside the structure to allow users to move it from one portent to the other. An optional storage area 26 may allow users to store exercise equipment, music, water or food supplies, etc.

[0028] In addition, as will be discussed in more detail further with regard to the CHI-BUILDER™, a computer or other electronics 28, such as a stereo or TV tuner, may reside in this

space, or in the interior that provides controls of the various systems on the interior, allowing customization to the user's needs. The computer may utilize a display 30, or the display 30 may be a television usable with or without a computer to allow users to select scenes for viewing while exercising or sleeping. A shelf 32 may also allow users to display flowers, rocks or other items.

[0029] As mentioned above, the chi-oriented structure may be used as an exercise, meditation or therapy spa structure, referred to here as a CHI-BUILDER™. In this embodiment, the structure allows users to position themselves within it, for their best advantage. The flexibility of the space allows for many different variations and may be suitable for many different activities, such as yoga, meditation, 'rebounding' involving use of a mini-trampoline, Tai-Chi or other moving meditations or martial arts.

[0030] In addition to the nature and orientation of the structure itself, additional systems may be added to provide the user access to other types of therapies. FIG. 3 shows an inside view of an embodiment of such systems. For the CHI-BUILDER™ embodiments, the structure may have additional features, such as a wood-framed floor 42, having a wet pan liner 40. Clay bricks 44 may reside on the wet pan liner, and the entire subfloor structure may be covered with natural stretched canvas or equivalent flooring 48.

[0031] Between the flooring and the clay bricks, an infrared or other heat emitter 46 would operate to transmit infrared waves to the user and raise the temperature inside the CHI-BUILDER™.

[0032] Additional heat emitters, such as infrared or other heaters, such as 50 would also reside on the wall panels, allowing the user to bring the CHI-BUILDER™ temperature up to a desired level, such as that used in 'hotbox' yoga, 105 degrees. In one example, the standard operating temperature would be 130 degrees, but could be higher or lower. Heat in general assists in de-toxifying the body. Further, rocks could be heated inside the CHI-BUILDER™ and used in hot rock therapies.

[0033] The heat provides users the ability to detoxify through sweating, similar to Native American sweat lodges, and hotbox yoga philosophies. By performing whatever activity the user wants to perform, such as yoga, martial arts, rebounding, etc., in a hot environment, the user can detoxify the body by sweating out the toxins. This is further assisted by the consumption of water, as will be discussed in more detail later. The heated environment allows for the sweating detoxification without stressing the body, as would happen if one tried to achieve the same level of sweat by exercise or exertion.

[0034] After use of the structure for whatever purpose, the user may desire to clean off the skin. A cool mist water generator may be included in the enclosure to allow the user to mist the body and towel off for hygiene purposes. The water mist generator 51 may be used for other purposes as well, such as to bring the enclosure to a particular level of humidity, etc.

[0035] In addition, the user may desire light and/or crystal therapy, available through light fixtures 52 for therapeutic or other uses. These may be programmable by the computer or just selected by the user manually, including red, green, yellow, blue, white, black light, and may also use a crystal filter. Sound therapy, through recorded music or sounds used to assist in meditation, may be available through the speakers such as 56.

[0036] For convenience and to encourage users to properly hydrate, a shelf 58 may be provided for water bottles, inside the panel. Proper hydration and available suitable water plays an important role in the process. 'Suitable' water may include, but is not limited to, living branch water, alkaline water, spun water, magnetized water, ionized water, etc., or any other type of water that has the main function of hydration.

[0037] The chi-oriented structure may also be employed to activate helpful energies in the water. Whether the structure itself is used to impart energies into the water, the use of specific materials in the water bottles such as glass, metal, non-leaching plastics, polycarbonate, etc., may enhance the properties of the water. Further, the water bottle or other container may be colored to impart light energy among other energies into the water.

[0038] A thermostat control 60 would allow the users to set the temperature controlled by the heaters. Other options include a storage cabinet 62, electronic components such as 64, if not in the storage area. Finally, to allow use of aromatherapy, a pressurizing fan 66 with essential oils or essential oil diffuser may be included. Alternatively, the fan 66 may be an air purification system or ionizer. As will be discussed with reference to later figures, the electronics and storage components may reside in an external portion of the structure.

[0039] This structure would allow users several possibilities, ranging from a very simple structure with little or no extras for quiet meditation or other activities to receiving multiple therapies or experiences at one time. Examples of these include meditation, elemental spatial therapy, aroma therapy, crystal therapy, yoga, sound therapy, light therapy, natural material energy therapy, color therapy, chakra balancing and earth energies absorption. A further modification may include a removable floor to allow unfettered access to the Earth. Stagnant energies, moving energies and holistic therapies may all be used or taken advantage of in the CHI-BUILDER™.

[0040] Several different goals may be enabled by the use of these different therapies in compounded use. These goals may include, but are not limited to weight loss, fat burning, energy focusing, centering, longevity, overall well being, stress reduction, and detoxification that may lead to lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol, and assistance in quitting smoking. Overall, it is believed that the use of the chi-oriented structure will build a person's, or animal's, as will be discussed in more detail later, life force energy.

[0041] The process for the proper choices of customization is based on classic Feng Shui. A mixture of the methods and options included in the CHI-BUILDER™ will be used to create the effects wanted. Some of these approaches that are built into the CHI-BUILDER™ include: the 5 elements approach, compass approach or bagua, and the Four Pillars of Chinese astrology.

[0042] The computer 28 may provide the user an interface into which the user can provide some necessary information, including personal information such as birth year, month, day, hour and place information, life concerns, issues currently being faced, goals of using the CHI-BUILDER™, etc. and the software would control all of the systems to maximize the user's advantage, as well as provide directions to the user as to orientation.

[0043] For example, Feng Shui uses different formulas to determine the kind of energy levels in a given time span of an individual or structure. Other formulas calculate a person's best location within a structure for sleeping or work. These

could be integrated into the software so that a user without knowledge of Feng Shui could enter the information needed through a series of questions, and the software would present the user with the proper location, etc. Another use of the computer or television is to play instructional videos for users as the user performs yoga flows, martial arts exercises, or guided meditations.

[0044] In another embodiment, users may construct the chi-oriented structure as a sleeping venue or cabin. In the SLEEPING CABIN™™ embodiment, shown in FIG. 4, many of the same or similar components may be provided as options, including the lights/crystals 52, the sound speakers 56, the water bottle shelf 58, the music and TV components 64 and the fan 66. In addition, there may be a light switch 61. The size of the structure may be adapted for children, single occupancy, double occupancy, etc. The door of the structure may also have a viewing panel, such as glass or polycarbonate, to allow the user to see out and others to see in as desired.

[0045] To be used as a sleeping venue, the cabin would have a bamboo or some similar material frame 72 to support a natural material mattress, such as natural rubber or latex 72. This structure provides the users the ability to orient themselves in the most favorable position, using the same customization choices used in the CHI-BUILDER™. In addition, it provides the user the ability to have a dedicated sleeping area separate from the energies of the outside. The user may go to the SLEEPING CABIN™ to rest between sessions in the CHI-BUILDER™ for example.

[0046] The user could again customize the sleeping environment using the computer, or the user's own knowledge, to provide the most advantageous environment for sleep. Many of the therapies listed for the CHI-BUILDER™ would also be available to the sleeping user.

[0047] An additional aspect of the structure may lie in a cover, such as canvas, rubberized cloth, oil cloth or other water resistant or waterproof materials. Whether used to seal the structure from the elements, which may have special purposes if the structure is built outside, the cover may have other beneficial effects. One such effect would result from the cover acting as a shield against electromagnetic fields (EMF). Alternatively, the EMF shield could reside on the interior of the structure as well, and may take the form of anti-EMF paint, etc.

[0048] An important aspect of the structure is the ability to construct it easily with a minimum of extra materials and tools, as well as using a limited number of people. An embodiment of a completed structure is shown in FIG. 5. The structure in this figure is configured as a CHI-BUILDER™ used as a rebounding exercise forum, but no limitation to this particular configuration is intended and none should be implied. As mentioned previously, the electronics, thermostat control and other items may be in an external storage area 122.

[0049] FIGS. 6-13 show examples of the various components from which the chi-oriented structure may be constructed, indoors or out, for a SLEEPING CABIN™™ resting, massage or a therapeutic or spa use. The various components shown in the particular construction embodiments are examples and are not intended to limit the structure or method of construction for the chi-oriented structures discussed above.

[0050] FIGS. 6-13 start from the bottom of the structure and move upward, but no limitation is intended nor should any be implied for that particular order. FIG. 6 shows a bottom frame joint 80. As can be seen the top surface 82 of the bottom frame

joint has a channel 84. This channel allows the builder to insert the materials used to make the sidewalls or faces discussed above.

[0051] FIG. 7 shows a second bottom frame joint. This frame joint is very similar to the one in FIG. 6 except that it has a portion 86 of the channel that angles away from the channel to allow it to mate up with another frame joint for a tightly connected corner where the one face joins another at a 45 degree angle. This becomes clearer when one looks at FIG. 8.

[0052] In FIG. 8, one can see the bottom frame joint having channel 84 and the extension portion 86 mated with a neighboring frame joint. This image shows the addition of a sidewall 90, as it resides in a channel such as 84, on the neighboring piece.

[0053] FIG. 9 shows another view of the frame bottom. The channel 84 on the right side mates with extended channel 86 on the piece on the left side. The sidewall 90 resides in the straight portion of the channel of the piece on the left side. This opening would be where the door opening would typically be arranged in the structure.

[0054] FIG. 10 shows a roof or top frame joint. The frame joint has a portion 90, with a channel 94 along an edge. This edge would be the inner edge of the frame joint and would be where the top roof boards insert. The channel for the sidewalls is not shown in this view as it is on the underside of the joint. The top view of this joint is shown in FIG. 11.

[0055] FIG. 12 shows a view of a partially completed portion of a roof. One can see the roof boards such as 96 and how they join together. This is similar as to how the sidewall boards join together as well. The boards, such as 96, have an extension 98 that slides into the groove 100, similar to tongue and groove flooring.

[0056] The roof boards such as 96 fit together to form a flat roof. As has been mentioned previously, this particular construction is not intended to limit the description of a chi-oriented structure. Other roof configurations may be used, including slanted, peaked, etc.

[0057] FIG. 13 shows all of the various components of this particular construction of a chi-oriented structure. As each frame joint 80 is populated with sidewalls such as 90, the roof joint 92 is added to form a face of the structure. Once the faces are formed and joined together, the roof boards 96 are connected together for the roof.

[0058] As mentioned previously, this method of construction avoids the use of adhesives such as glues, nails or other fasteners. However, there is no limitation to such a method and these components may be used if so desired. Also not shown in FIGS. 6-13 are the openings shown in FIGS. 1-4 to power cords and other elements, such as cabinets, shelves, the floor and the bench, if desired.

[0059] If constructed out-of-doors, there may be a central power supply to which the various components, including the lights, heaters, stereo, television, computer, etc. connect. This would allow a single point of contact for the entire structure to allow it to be 'plugged in' in a very simple manner. An example of this type of central power supply is shown in FIG. 14. The central power supply 120 may be organized into an external cabinet 122 that is constructed according to the principles of the CHI-BUILDER™ structure. As shown previously, this cabinet may be enclosed in an extension of the structure that is in harmony with the structure's appearance.

[0060] This cabinet 122 may be modular and attachable to the outside of the structure such that users could add the

cabinet at a later time. In the example shown, the cabinet also provides the mounting for a touch-screen or display **30**, mentioned earlier, that allows control of the various systems selected by the user to be included. This display may also be mounted elsewhere, such as inside the structure. Cabinet **122** may be used in both indoor and outdoor units, and may extend to the full height of the structure or only partially.

**[0061]** Any of the systems contained in the cabinet, including but not limited to the lighting system, the controller and/or thermostat, and the sound system, are accessible from inside the enclosure. This access may be directly, such as through an access panel or port to the cabinet, or through a wireless remote control that can control the various systems.

**[0062]** Of course, in its simplest configuration, no power would be needed for the SLEEPING CABIN™, or a CHI-BUILDER™ without the hotbox, music, light therapy, etc. options.

**[0063]** Another consideration when constructed out of doors involves planning for moisture and its effect on the structure itself. FIGS. 15-17 show different views of an alternative joint **124**. In the outdoors, the structure's wood may swell in response to moisture. The alternative frame joint **124** avoids spreading. Referring back to the structural figures, one can see that if the joints were to spread too far, some of the other portions of the structure may separate. The notch such as **126** and its corresponding slot on the mating piece shown in FIGS. 16 and 17 alleviate that issue.

**[0064]** In addition, the tongue-in-groove construction may be further secured by using a double tongue-in-groove construction **128** such as that shown in FIG. 18. The double tongue-in-groove will further secure the components, as well as providing an extra barrier against water entering the structure. For more active uses, mentioned above, the double tongue in groove construction may reduce or eliminate the need for fasteners, or allow only natural material fasteners, such as wooden dowels, to be used.

**[0065]** Other variations on the structure are of course possible. For example, a user may have two structures side by side, each for a different application. FIG. 19 shows an example of such a configuration. In this embodiment, there are two chi-oriented structures **130** and **132** oriented side by side. For convenience and without any limitation, the doors **142** and **140** are positioned to allow ease of access between the two structures. A floor **144** may lay outside the two structures to allow a user to pass back and forth between the structures without contacting the floor or ground underneath, as well as for aesthetic purposes.

**[0066]** In the embodiment of FIG. 19, the electronics cabinet **134** may be part of the structure **130**, if the structure **130** were to be used for activities such as rebounding, yoga, meditation, martial arts, etc. Either or both structures could be used for different active pursuits, one could be used for active pursuits and the other be a sleeping venue, both could be sleeping venues, or one could be a cool-down or chiller venue. In the embodiment of FIG. 19, the structure **132** may be a 'chiller' having a cool mist or air generator **138** contained in a cabinet **136** to lower the ambient temperature inside the structure.

**[0067]** A user's core temperature may rise after performing activities in the adjacent CHI-BUILDER™, and using the chiller **132** to lower that temperature may assist the user in recovery. It also affords the user the ability to change clothes and clean up after sweating out the toxins in the structure **130**.

Also, as mentioned above, the structure **132** in this embodiment may provide a sleeping venue.

**[0068]** Another option for this structure is a chi-oriented structure for pets or other animals, an example of which is shown in FIG. 20. The structure **150** would consist of a scaled down version of the larger chi-oriented structure, and some of the more interactive features may not exist. It would provide people with the ability to care for their pets' well-being on a more beneficial level than just providing the pet with a house. The front of the structure may have a hinged door, with a gridded panel to allow for ventilation and cooling. Due to the high quality of the building materials, the smaller structures could integrate into the furnishings and décor of a home.

**[0069]** In addition to the dog-type pet structure of FIG. 20, two of the structures could be stacked for felines or other animals that use litter pans. The litter pan could reside in the bottom structure, with the upper structure allowing the animal to have a separated sleeping or playing environment.

**[0070]** The basic structure could also be used as a green house or other transparent structure. An example would include manufacturing the panels out of polycarbonate, glass or other transparent material. Alternatively, only selected panels or the roof may be manufactured from transparent materials, for purposes of a green house or merely as a structure. Using a transparent roof may allow the structures to be manufactured modularly, with only the roof being changed. The chi-gathering aspects of the structure may prove beneficial for growing plants and food.

**[0071]** With regard to food, the building could also include a root cellar for storing food, or may be set up to be a root cellar for growing root plants such as potatoes or carrots.

**[0072]** Thus, although there has been described to this point a particular embodiment for a method and apparatus for a chi-oriented structure, it is not intended that such specific references be considered as limitations upon the scope of this invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A structure, comprising:
  - eight walls forming an octagonal structure, wherein the walls are arranged to be self-supporting without the use of external fasteners, each wall having an internal face; a least one heat source arranged to provide heat to the structure as desired;
  - a roof having an octagonal shape, the roof attaching to the walls without the use of external fasteners; and an enclosure formed from the walls and roof.
2. The structure of claim 1 further comprising a chi-oriented structure, the walls and roof being arranged in accordance with at least one of Feng Shui, Chi-Gong, five elements, and four pillars of Chinese astrology.
3. The structure of claim 1, further comprising a lighting system to provide colored lights according to a selected light therapy.
4. The structure of claim 1, further comprising a sound system arranged to provide at least one of sound therapy or music.
5. The structure of claim 1, wherein the heat source comprises a heat source on each face of the structure.
6. The structure of claim 1, further comprising a controller, the controller arranged to provide control of at least one of a heating system, a lighting system, and a sound system.
7. The structure of claim 1, further comprising a floor.
8. The structure of claim 7, wherein the floor comprises one of clay tile, wood, and stone.

9. The structure of claim 7, wherein the floor includes a wet pan liner.

10. The structure of claim 1, the structure further including a bench movable among the eight faces.

11. The structure of claim 1, the structure further including at least one shelf.

12. The structure of claim 1, further comprising a mattress.

13. The structure of claim 12, the mattress being of octagonal shape and occupying substantially all of a horizontal dimension of the enclosure.

14. The structure of claim 1, further comprising at least one external cabinet arranged to be accessible from inside the enclosure.

15. A structure, comprising:

at least three walls, wherein the walls are arranged to be self-supporting without the use of external fasteners, each wall having an internal face;

a roof, the roof attaching to the walls without the use of external fasteners; and

an enclosure formed from the walls and roof, wherein the walls and roof are manufactured only of natural materials.

16. The structure of claim 15, further comprising a chi-oriented structure arranged in accordance with the principles of at least one of Feng Shui, Chi-Gong, five elements, and four pillars of Chinese astrology

17. The structure of claim 15, further comprising at least one heat source in the enclosure.

18. The structure of claim 15, further comprising a mattress in the enclosure.

19. The structure of claim 15, further comprising fasteners arranged to reinforce the walls.

20. The structure of claim 15, further comprising at least one of a lighting system, a sound system, and a heat source.

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