Nov. 28, 1967 G. S. WACHS 3,355,580

SKY RIDE

Filed Oct. 13, 1965 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

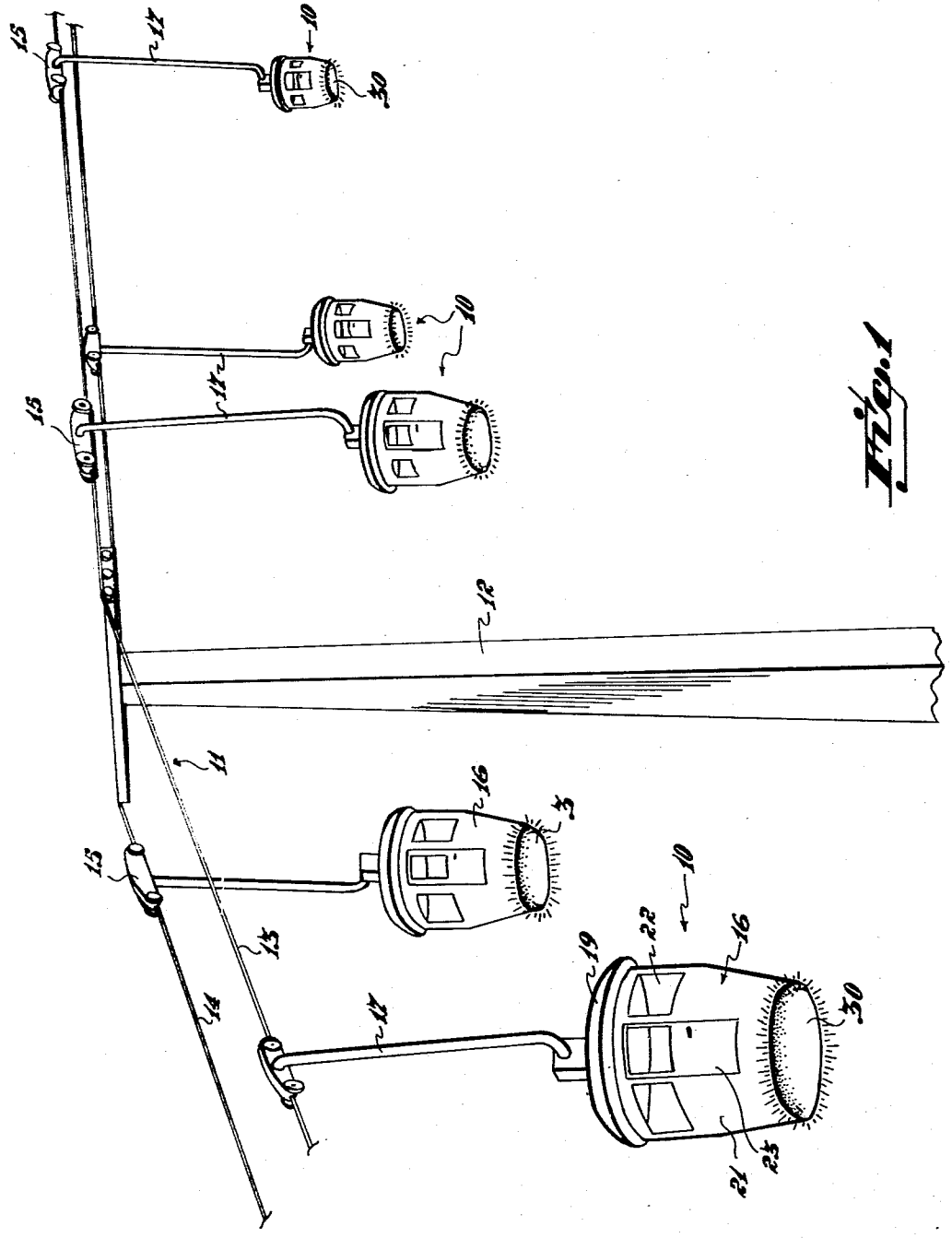

Fig. 1

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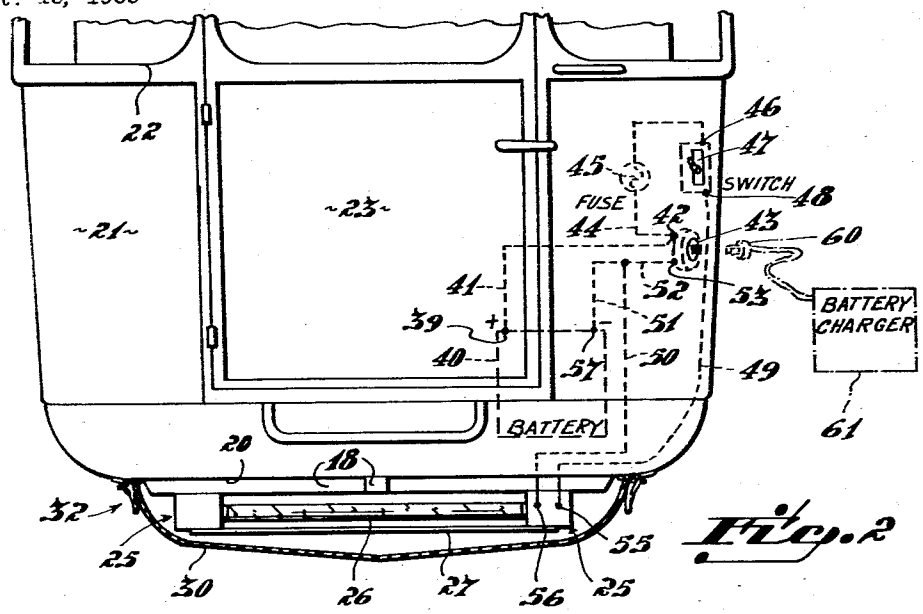

Fig. 2

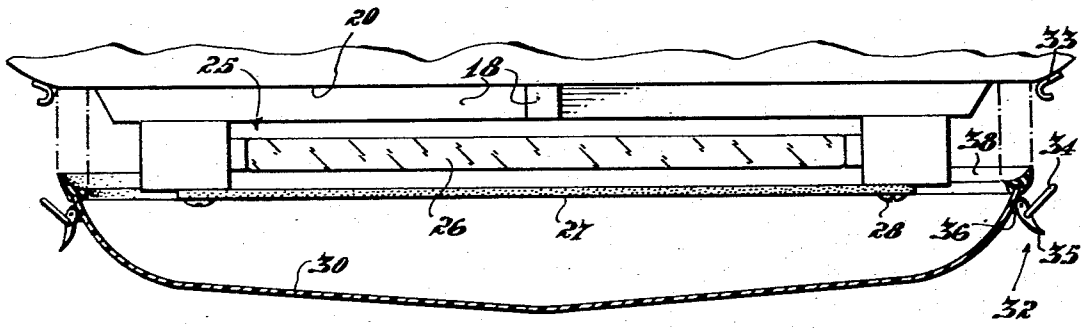

Fig. 3

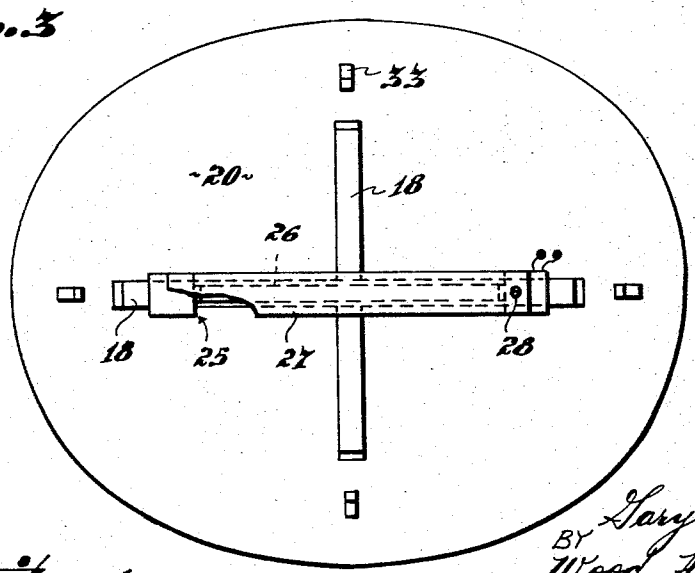

Fig. 4

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SKY RIDE

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The device relates to cable cars of the type used for sky rides in amusement parks and consists of placing a translucent light diffusing cover over approximately the entire bottom of the car. Underneath the translucent cover is a light such that at night when the light is turned on the entire bottom of the car will be lighted and give the appearance of large "moons" moving about the park.

This invention relates to cable car sky rides.

It has been an objective of this invention to beautify and enhance the aesthetic and indirectly the commercial appeal of amusement park sky rides.

A large volume of amusement park business is conducted in the evening after dark. At this time, those parks which have invested substantially in a sky ride lose most of the aesthetic as well as the economic benefit of this ride because it is high above the lighted park where it travels unseen and unnoticed by many of the park visitors. It has therefore been an objective of this invention to call attention of park visitors to the sky ride after dark when the ride would otherwise go unnoticed.

Still another objective of this invention has been to direct attention of evening park visitors to the sky ride in an unobtrusive and subtle fashion which enhances the picturesque appeal of the park and of the rides. This is in contrast to the customary and often offensive hard sell approach of barkers, spotlights and all of the other traditional flim-flam which serves only to drive many sensitive visitors from the amusement parks.

The apparatus which accomplishes these objectives consists of large luminous "moons" or "flying saucers" attached to the bottoms of the individual cars or gondolas of an amusement park sky ride. In the evening, these "moons" or "flying saucers" become visible from throughout the park as they glide sequentially from one end of the park to the other.

The "moons" consist of large colored translucent light diffusers mounted over light sources attached to the bottom of each gondola car. These diffusers cover approximately the complete bottom area of the gondola so that they are clearly visible in the dark for a long distance measured in terms of miles. Because the bottom of the gondola is opaque, the translucent diffuser is the only part of the gondola clearly visible from the ground at night, so that the appearance is one of plural "moons" or "flying saucers" floating over the park.

The color of the translucent diffusers is preferably chosen to match that of the gondola cars so that during the daylight hours, when the light beneath the diffusers is turned off, the diffusers appear opaque and match the colors of the cars. The diffusers thus do not detract from the cars or gondola during the day and greatly enhance the appearance of the cars at night.

The primary advantage of this invention is the increased public cognizance which results from its use on a sky ride during the evening or night. Because the public is thus made aware of the ride, they use it to the commercial benefit of the owner. Additionally, it significantly enhances the nocturnal beauty of the park or area surrounding the sky ride.

These and other objects and advantages of the invention of this application will be more readily apparent from a description of the accompanying drawings in which:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of a portion of a sky ride incorporating the invention of this application,

FIGURE 2 is a side elevational view, partially in cross section, of a portion of a gondola car of the sky ride of FIGURE 1,

FIGURE 3 is an enlarged and partially exploded view of a portion of the car of FIGURE 2,

FIGURE 4 is a bottom view, partially broken away, of the gondola car of FIGURE 2 with the translucent light diffuser removed.

Referring to FIGURE 1, it will be seen that the sky ride to which the invention of this application is applied consists of a plurality of cable cars or gondolas **10** suspended from a cable **11** which extends between two spaced stations (not shown) and is supported at spaced points between the stations by T-shaped towers **12**. The cable **11** is of the endless variety which has one stretch **13** extending from one station to the other and a second stretch **14** extending back to the first station with the ends of the cable being joined. To move the car between stations, the cable cars **10** are clamped to the moving cable **11** by conventional cable clamps **15** so that cars clamped to one stretch are transported in one direction while simultaneously cars clamped to the other stretch move in the opposite direction.

Each cable car **10** consists of a sheet metal body **16** mounted over a metal frame **18** which is in turn connected to the cable clamp **15** by a suspension bar **17**. Each body **16** includes a roof **19**, a floor **20**, and side walls **21** having the usual windows **22** and door **23**.

Attached to the bottom of the frame **18** of each of the cars **10** is a neon light fixture **25** in which is mounted a neon lamp **26**. A translucent shield **27** in the form of a narrow rectangular strip of plastic is attached to the bottom of the fixture **25** as by screws **28**. The shield extends from one end of the fixture to the other so as to shield the lamp **26** when viewed from below as is explained more fully hereinafter.

Mounted over the bottom of the car or gondola **10** is a translucent plastic light diffuser **30**. This diffuser **30** is generally convex when viewed in cross-section and is of the same general shape and size as the bottom of the car or gondola **10** so that it covers approximately the complete bottom of the car. Preferably it is of the same color as the exterior side walls **21** of the car. Thus, in daylight it appears opaque and matches the opaque side walls **21** of the car. In the evening, however, when the neon light **26** is turned on or is lit and the surrounding area is dark, the diffuser **30** appears as a colored "moon" or "flying saucer" in the sky as the cars move from one station to the other.

In order to evenly light the translucent diffuser **30** and obscure the fact that the light is eminating from a lamp mounted under the diffuser **30**, the translucent shield **27** is provided. This shield is mounted immediately adjacent the underside of the neon lamp **26** so as to preclude the light source showing through the bottom of the translucent diffuser **30**. In other words, it breaks up the light pattern and eliminates any "bright spot" which would otherwise be visible from immediately below the diffuser **30**.

The diffuser **30** is secured to the bottom of each gondola car by means of four conventional over-center clips **32**. Each of these clips **32** includes a hook-shaped bracket **33** welded to the lower portion of a side wall **21** of the car adjacent the bottom wall **20**. Secured over each of these brackets **33** is a U-shaped locking member **34** hav-

ing its legs pivotly secured within a thumb lock piece **35**. The thumb piece **35** is pivotly attached to a bracket **36** which is in turn secured to the diffuser **30**.

For purposes of sealingly securing the diffuser **30** over the light fixture **25**, the diffuser **30** has a resilient rubber seal or gasket **38** fitted around its upper edge. When the U-shaped locks **34** are fitted over the hooks **33** and forced downwardly upon downward movement of the thumb pieces **35**, the ends of the locks **34** move over-center relative to the pivots of the thumb pieces **35** with the result that the gasket **38** is compressed and remains under compression to securely and sealingly hold the translucent diffuser **30** on the bottom of the gondola car **10**.

Referring to FIGURE 2, the electrical circuit for controlling the neon lamp **26** is illustrated in phantom lines. This circuit consists of a rechargeable wet cell battery **40** mounted in the interior of each gondola car **10**. The circuit from the battery to the light fixture **18** includes a lead **41** from the the positive terminal **39** of the battery to a terminal **42** of a battery charger socket **43** mounted in a side wall **21** of each gondola car **10**. The terminal **42** of the recharger socket **43** is connected by a lead **44** through a fuse **45** to one terminal **46** of a light switch **47** mounted in the side wall **21** of the gondola car adjacent the recharger socket **43**. The other terminal **48** of the light switch **47** is connected via a lead **49** to one terminal **55** of the light fixture **25**. The other terminal **56** of the light fixture **25** is connected by a pair of leads **50, 51** to the other or negative terminal **57** of the battery. Additionally, the negative terminal **57** of the battery is connected to the second terminal **53** of the recharger socket **43** via a lead **52**.

When the light switch **47** is turned on, a circuit is completed from the terminal **39** of the battery **40** to the battery terminal **57** via lead **41**, terminal **42**, lead **44**, fuse **45**, through the light switch **47**, lead **49**, fixture **25**, and leads **50, 51**. When the battery is recharged, the switch **47** is turned off and a plug-in jack **60** from a battery charger **61** is inserted into the socket **43** so as to complete a circuit from the battery charger via lead **41** to the positive terminal of the battery **40** and by leads **52, 51** to the negative terminal **56** of the battery.

Generally, sky rides are used in amusement parks where the gondola cars are each colored a different color. Thus, the visual effect at night when the lamps **26** are on or lit is the aesthetically pleasant one of many different colored "moons" or "flying saucers" moving quietly from one end of the park to the other. Because of the large size of these "moons" or "saucers," which cover the complete bottom of the gondola cars **10**, they are visible for miles around.

The primary advantage of these "moons" or "saucers" attached to the bottom of the cars **10**, aside from the pleasing appearance which they add to the park or to the ride, is the additional revenue which results from the fact that visitors to the park are immediately aware of the ride and use it at a time when it would otherwise travel over the park unnoticed.

While only a single preferred embodiment of the invention has been disclosed and described herein, those skilled in the art to which this invention pertains will readily appreciate numerous changes and modifications which may be made without departing from the spirit of the invention. Therefore I do not intend to be limited except by the scope of the appended claims.

Having described my invention, I claim:

1. A sky ride for transporting passengers between spaced stations comprising:

an endless cable extending between at least two spaced towers,

a plurality of cable cars, each of said cars including a suspension bar secured at its upper end to said cable by a cable clamp, each of said cars having a body which includes a roof, a floor, and side walls, said side walls having at least one door through which passengers may enter and leave said cars, said side walls and said bottom wall of said body being opaque,

the improvement which comprises a translucent light diffuser covering approximately the complete bottom wall of each of said cars,

a light source mounted between each of said translucent diffusers and said bottom walls, and

electric means for lighting said light sources.

2. A sky ride for transporting passengers between spaced stations comprising:

an endless cable extending between at least two spaced towers,

a plurality of cable cars, each of said cars including a suspension bar secured at its upper end to said cable by a cable clamp, each of said cars having a body which includes a roof, a floor, and side walls, said side walls having at least one door through which passengers may enter and leave said cars, said side walls and said bottom wall of said body being opaque,

the improvement which comprises a translucent light diffuser covering approximately the complete bottom wall of each of said cars,

a light source mounted between each of said translucent diffusers and said bottom walls,

the translucence of said diffuser being such that said diffuser appears opaque in the daylight and is translucent in the dark when said light source is illuminated, and

electric means for lighting said light sources.

3. A sky ride for transporting passengers between spaced stations comprising:

an endless cable extending between at least two spaced towers,

a plurality of cable cars, each of said cars including a suspension bar secured at its upper end to said cable by a cable clamp, each of said cars having a body which includes a roof, a floor, and side walls, said side walls having at least one door through which passengers may enter and leave said cars, said side walls and said bottom wall of said body being opaque,

the improvement which comprises a translucent light diffuser covering approximately the complete bottom wall of each of said cars, each of said translucent diffusers being of the same color as that of the exterior side walls of the car upon which said translucent diffuser is mounted,

a light source mounted between each of said translucent diffusers and said bottom walls,

the translucence of said diffuser being such that said diffuser appears opaque in the daylight and is translucent in the dark when said light source is illuminated, and

electric means for lighting said light sources.

4. A sky ride for transporting passengers between spaced stations comprising:

a plurality of cable cars adapted to be supported from a cable which extends between said spaced stations,

each of said cars having opaque side walls and an opaque bottom wall,

the improvement which comprises a first translucent light diffuser covering approximately the complete bottom wall of each of said cars, each of said translucent diffusers being of the same color as that of the exterior side walls of the car upon which said translucent diffuser is mounted,

a light source mounted between each of said translucent diffusers and said bottom walls,

a second translucent light diffuser mounted between each of said light sources and said first translucent diffusers so as to preclude the appearance of a bright

spot on the surface of said first translucent diffuser when said light source is illuminated,

the translucence of said first diffuser being such that said diffuser appears opaque in the daylight and is translucent in the dark when said light source is illuminated, and

electric means for lighting said light sources.

5. The sky ride of claim 1 wherein said light source consists of a neon light bulb mounted upon the bottom of each of said cars.

6. The sky ride of claim 5 wherein said electric means for lighting said light source includes a rechargeable battery mounted within each of said cars and an electric switch in a circuit between each of said batteries and said neon light bulbs.

7. The sky ride of claim 6 wherein said circuit further includes a plug-in socket mounted in one of said side walls for the reception of an electric circuit plug from a battery recharger.

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