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Schnuckle

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(54) **KINETIC FLAME DEVICE**

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(Continued)

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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F21V 33/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **362/249.02**; 362/810; 362/277

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 362/810
See application file for complete search history.

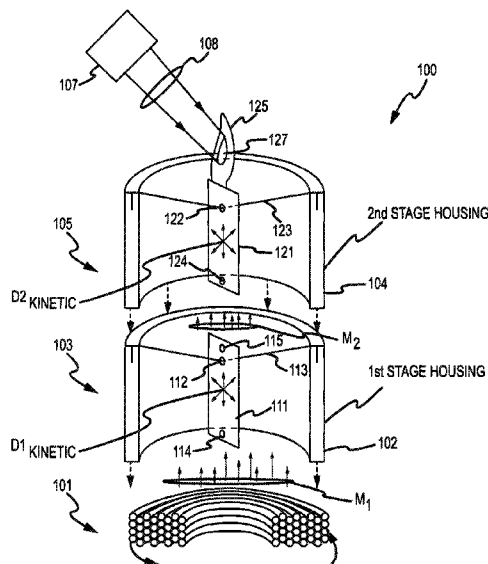
An apparatus creating a flickering flame effect. The apparatus includes a housing with an interior space with first and second stages. A drive mechanism generates a time varying electromagnetic field extending into the first stage. A first pendulum member is pivotally mounted in the interior space of the first stage and includes first and second magnets on first and second ends, with the first end proximate to the drive mechanism such that the first magnet interacts with the varying electromagnetic field to cause movement of the pendulum member. The apparatus includes a second pendulum member pivotally mounted in the second stage with a magnet on a first end proximate to the second end of the first pendulum member. A flame silhouette element extends from the second pendulum member, and a light source transmits light onto the flame silhouette, which is moving due to the magnetic coupling of the pendulum members.

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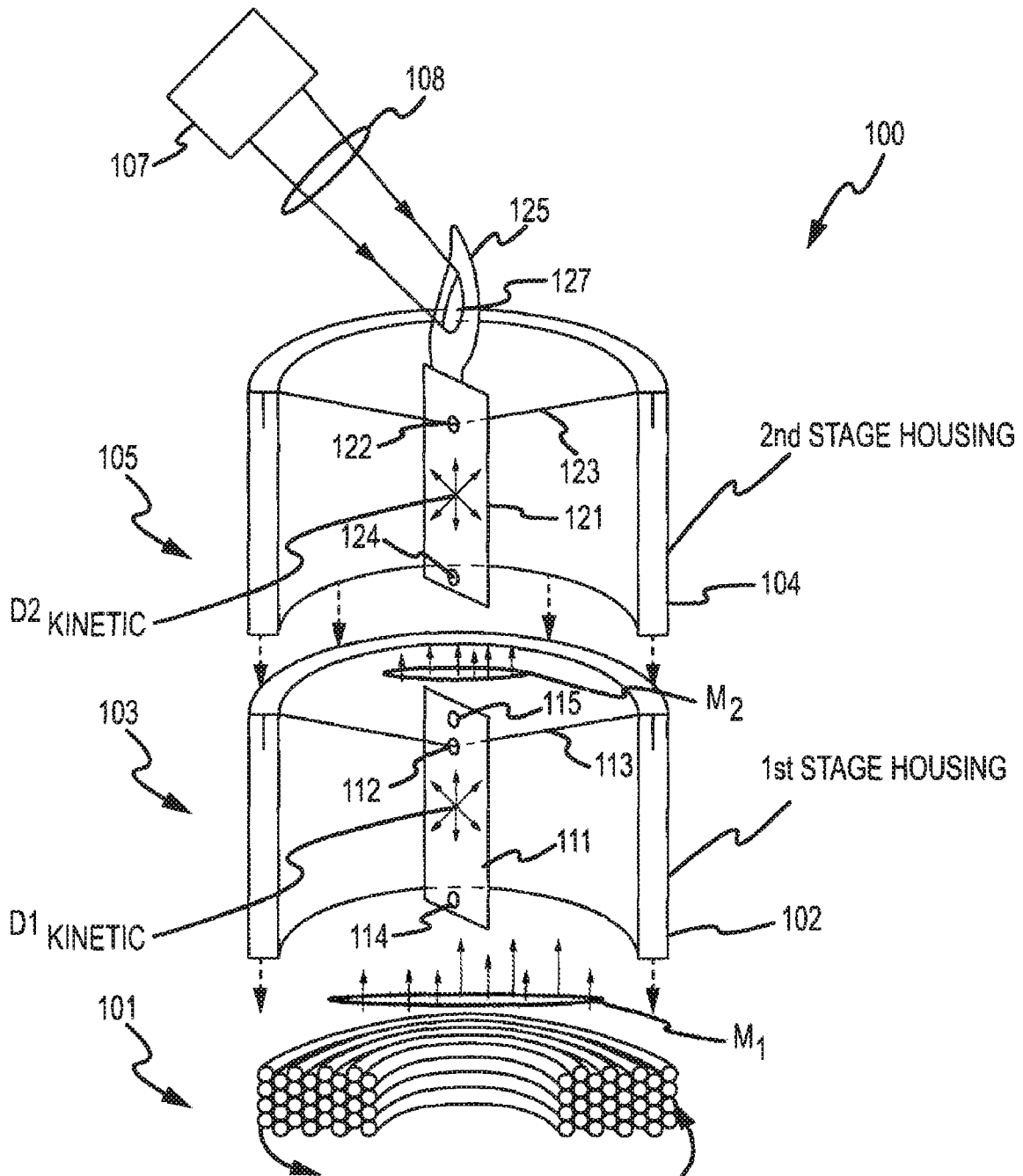


FIG. 1

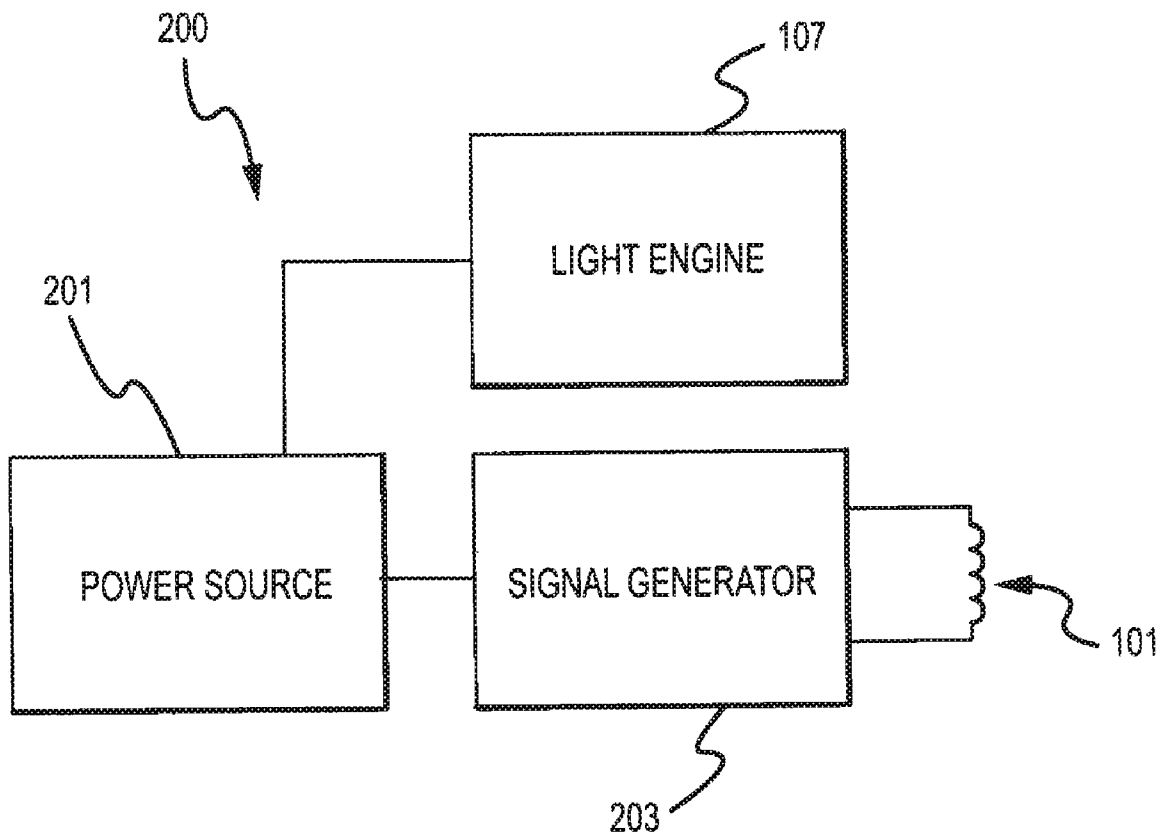


FIG.2

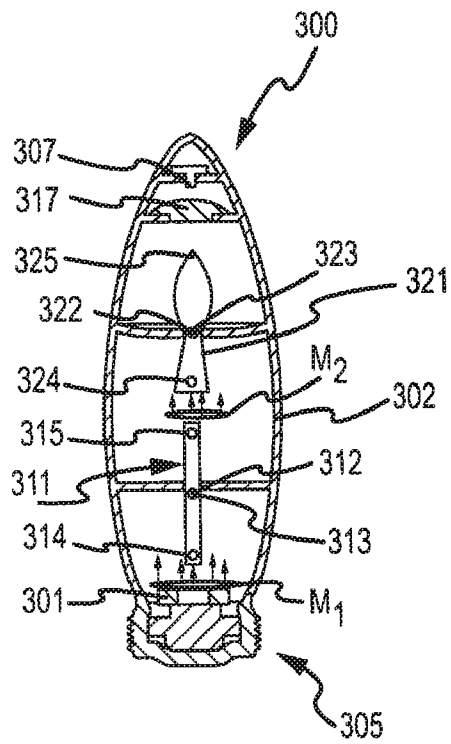


FIG. 3

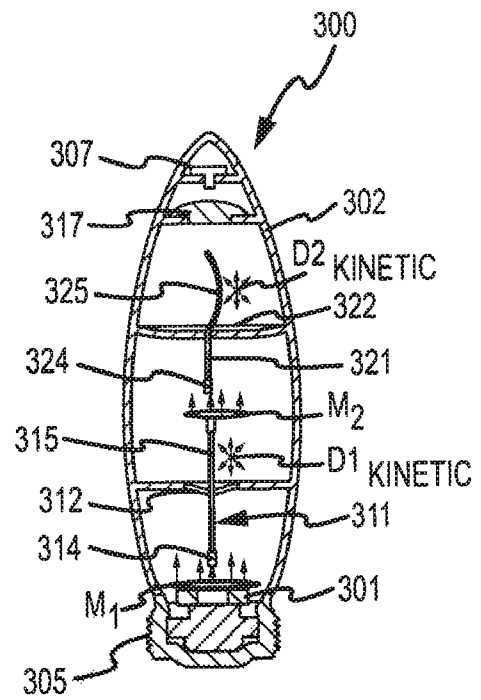


FIG. 4

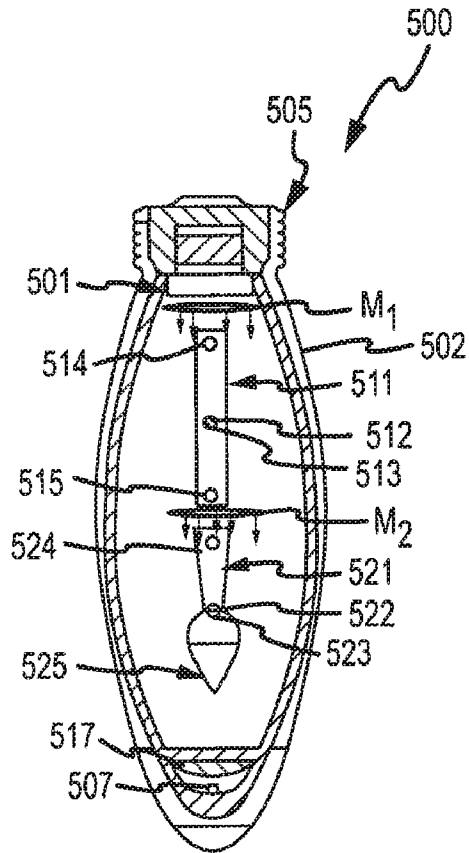


FIG. 5

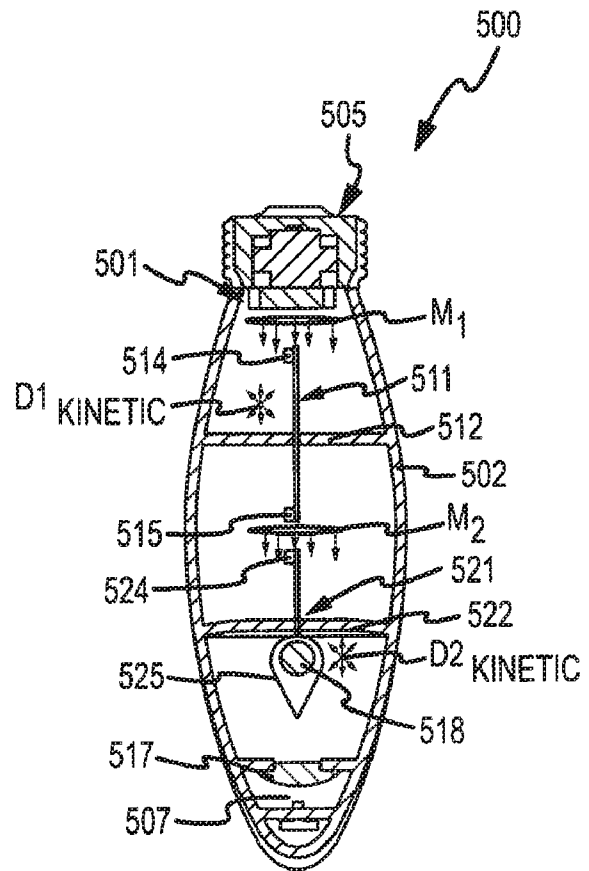


FIG. 6

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KINETIC FLAME DEVICE**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/101,611 filed Sep. 30, 2008, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates, in general, to methods and systems for animated lighting, and, more particularly, to systems, devices and methods for simulating a flickering flame providing kinetic light movement.

2. Relevant Background

A difficult challenge for a special effects artist is the simulation of a single candle flame. Simulated flames in large fires such as fireplaces or stage sets are comparatively easy to design because they are normally viewed from a distance, and much of the effect of a large fire involves glow and embers, which can be readily simulated. A single candle, however, is often viewed at short distances with the focus of the effect falling on the flickering light of the solitary flame moving kinetically or randomly on a wick.

Flames are the visible, light-emitting part of a fire. Solitary flames are complex kinetic interactions of fuel, temperature gradients, convection, and ambient airflow. These interactions produce a continuously and randomly moving light having loosely defined regions of various colors where the regions change size and shape kinetically or in unpredictable manners in space. Despite the complexity, people are so familiar with the appearance of natural flames that it is very difficult to provide a convincing simulation that appears real or natural to a viewer, especially at short viewing distances of several feet or less.

Combustion-based candles create safety issues in many environments because of the presence of flame and heat. These conventional candles are high-maintenance and so are not suitable for long-term usage such as in religious buildings, theme parks, memorials, window displays, museums and the like without continuous maintenance. On the other hand, conventional wax candles produce a light that appeals to many people and can be readily manufactured for a wide variety of applications such as table lighting, room lighting, wall sconces, spiritual ceremonies, theatrical lighting, decorative lighting, and lighting for holidays and special events. Hence, a continuing need exists for an artificial flame simulator that can be used more safely and with less maintenance than conventional wax or combustion candles, and the artificial flame simulator or device should produce a pleasing and realistic simulation of solitary flames and be adaptable to a variety of form factors.

There are a variety of flame imitation novelty products that utilize various methods to simulate a real flame for display purposes such as those disclosed in U.S. Pat. Nos. 7,125,142, 6,454,425 and 4,550,363. Specifically, U.S. Pat. No. 7,125,142 describes a device that uses multiple colored lights affixed to a translucent shell where the lights are energized according to a computer program that attempts to animate the light without moving parts. U.S. Pat. No. 6,454,425 discloses a candle flame simulating device that includes a blowing device for generating an air flow and for directing the flowing air toward a flame-like flexible member, in order to blow and oscillate or to vibrate the flame-like flexible member so as to simulate a candle. U.S. Pat. No. 4,550,363 discloses an elec-

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tric-light bulb fitted with a light permeable and light-scattering lamp casing. These and other attempts result in flame displays that are relatively poor imitations of a real flame and have not been widely adopted by the commercial or retail markets. In addition, such devices typically require substantial energy inputs and require frequent battery replacement, which can drive up purchase and operating costs and require undesirable levels of maintenance for ongoing use.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention addresses the above and other problems by providing kinetic flame devices that create lighting effects driven by real but chaotic physical movements and by providing methods for making and using such kinetic flame devices. Some embodiments of the present invention may include a drive mechanism that stimulates and/or perturbs a complex interaction between gravity, mass, electromagnetic field strength, magnetic fields, air resistance and light to achieve a kinetic or random flame effect, but, interestingly, the complex interaction is not directly modulated or controlled so as to reduce control and/or driving requirements or components. The motion and light generated by the kinetic flame devices produce light that convincingly reproduces the kinetic light output of a solitary flickering flame such as may be provided by a conventional combustion or wax candle.

More particularly, an apparatus is provided for simulating a flame such as a flame of a candle or the like. The flame simulating apparatus may include a housing with one or more sidewalls (or housing portions) that define an interior space with a first stage and a second stage (or upper and lower spaces). A drive mechanism such as an electric coil may be provided for generating a time varying electromagnetic field that extends into the first stage. The apparatus may also include a first stage pendulum member that is pivotally mounted within the interior space of the first stage. The first stage pendulum member may include a first magnet on a first end (e.g., embedded or attached permanent magnet) and a second magnet on a second end (e.g., embedded or attached permanent magnet). In some cases, the first end is positioned proximate to the drive mechanism such that the first magnet interacts with the time varying electromagnetic field to kinetically displace (or displace in a random pattern) the first stage pendulum member over time (or over/during an operating period for the drive mechanism).

The apparatus may also include a second stage pendulum member that is pivotally mounted within the interior space of the second stage. The second stage pendulum member includes a magnet on a first end (e.g., a permanent magnet attached or embedded to the member), and this end of the second stage pendulum member is positioned proximate to the second end of the first stage pendulum member. In other cases, ferromagnetic materials are provided in place of the magnets, e.g., the drive mechanism may apply a force on a tag or element of ferromagnetic material with the other end of this first stage pendulum having a magnet or another ferromagnetic material (with the second stage pendulum having either a magnet or a ferromagnetic tag/element depending on the first stage pendulum's inclusion of a magnet or ferromagnetic material as one of these two proximate components would be a magnet). In some cases, the two ends of the pendulum members are spaced apart to avoid physical/mechanical interference but close enough that their magnets interact to transmit the kinetic movement of the first stage pendulum member to the second stage pendulum member. The second stage pendulum member may further include a flame silhouette element extending from a second end of the second stage

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pendulum member. The apparatus also may include a light source adapted to selectively transmit light onto the flame silhouette element. The drive mechanism may include a coil of wire and a signal generator providing time-varying current to the coil to create the time-varying magnetic field.

During use, in response to the interacting between the first magnet and the time-varying magnetic field, the first stage pendulum member may be displaced in a random pattern over time. Further during use, in response to the displacement of the first stage pendulum member in the random pattern, the second stage pendulum member may be displaced in another random pattern, whereby the flame silhouette element has kinetic motion concurrently with receiving the light from the light source.

In some embodiment of the apparatus, the first and second stage pendulum members each comprise an elongated, planar body. The body of the first stage pendulum member may be pivotally supported by a first support element at a first location proximate to the second end of the first stage pendulum member while the body of the second stage pendulum member may be pivotally supported by a second support element at a second location proximate to the second end of the second stage pendulum member. The first support member may include a rigid body (such as a wire, rod, shaft, or the like) that extends across the interior space of the housing and through a hole at the first location in the first stage pendulum member. Similarly, the second support member may include a rigid body that extends across the interior space of the housing and through a hole at the second location in the first stage pendulum member. In other embodiments the first (and, in some cases, the second) support member may be a flexible member such as a thread or the like so as to allow a more chaotic movement of the lower pendulum such as allowing a side-to-side movement of the flexible member relative to its tethered ends. The first location in the first stage pendulum member may be disposed between the first and second magnets and more proximate to the second magnet than to the first magnet. In some embodiments of the apparatus, the first and second support members each extend, at a central portion mating with the first and second stage pendulum members, respectively, a distance toward the drive mechanism. According to some embodiments, the apparatus includes a base that is mated with or a part of the housing and is located adjacent the first stage. In such embodiments, the base houses the drive mechanism and wherein the base is configured to electrically couple to a light socket to provide a power source for the drive mechanism and for the light source. In other embodiments, the electrical coupling may be provided with the base having a plug such as for a standard wall socket to allow the base to be plugged directly into a wall socket (e.g., similar to a night light but with a flame effect).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 shows a cut-away perspective view of an embodiment of a kinetic flame effect device in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 shows an exemplary drive mechanism in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention as may be used with the device of FIG. 1, for example;

FIG. 3 shows a cross section of an alternative embodiment of a kinetic flame device in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 4 shows the embodiment of FIG. 3 at a different perspective such as rotated about 90 degrees;

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FIG. 5 shows a cross section of another alternative embodiment of a kinetic flame device in accordance with the present invention; and

FIG. 6 shows the embodiment of FIG. 5 at a different perspective such as rotated about 90 degrees.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention involves devices that create lighting effects driven by real, chaotic and physical movements and methods for making and using such devices. Prior devices that attempt to simulate flickering flames generally used modulated or controlled motion to mimic a flame, but these devices produced less than ideal results in part because the complexity of a natural flame is difficult to mimic or simulate. Alternatively, some prior devices attempted to control or modulate the intensity, color, and/or other characteristics of a light source such as by blinking, which also produced a less than realistic result. In contrast, the present invention stimulates and/or perturbs a complex interaction between gravity, mass, electromagnetic field strength, magnetic fields, air resistance and light, but the complex interaction is not directly modulated or controlled. Accordingly, the motion and light generated by the system in accordance with the present invention produces light that convincingly reproduces the kinetic or random light output of a flickering flame.

The present invention can be adapted to a wide variety of form factors to meet the needs of particular applications. FIG. 1 shows a single-flame candle implementation whereas the implementations of FIGS. 3-6 demonstrate lamp-base form factors that can be used as a bulb alternative with many conventional lighting fixtures. Embodiments of the invention can vary in scale to meet the functional and aesthetic needs of a particular application. Power supplies described herein may be provided by batteries, AC/DC power supplies, solar cells, or other available power sources. Although the invention involves complex interactions between many forces, it is typically preferred that the elements of the invention be implemented simply to enhance reliability and longevity of the product. Accordingly, although specific examples of particularly robust construction and components are described herein, actual implementations may vary in complexity.

FIG. 1 shows a cut-away perspective view of an embodiment of a kinetic flame device 100 in accordance with the present invention that resembles a conventional wax candle such as a pillar, taper, container candle, votive, tea light and the like depending on the scale and dimensions of the particular application. FIG. 1 shows a two stage assembly for convenience in manufacture, but the invention can be implemented as a unitary, single stage body, in two stages as shown in FIG. 1, or as three or more stages if desired. Additional stages affect both the form factor as well as the range, speed and variability of the light produced. A stage may damp or amplify these characteristics depending on the particular geometry of the elements within the particular stage.

A drive mechanism (or electrically driven motion engine) 101 is provided that acts to create a time-varying magnetic field, M_1 , and this mechanism may take a variety of forms such as a coil as shown in FIG. 1. Drive mechanism or coil 101 at the base of the embodiment in FIG. 1 includes a wound wire coil, which may be formed, for example, using a conductive wire coated with an insulator. The windings of coil 101 may be held in place with tape, adhesive, epoxy or other material (not shown) that holds the wire together in a desired shape. The coil 101 may be generally circular as shown in FIG. 1 or any other convenient shape such as oval, square, triangular, or

an irregular shape. Coil **101** may have an air core or hollow space/void as shown in FIG. **1**, or may use a magnetic core such as iron, iron alloys, ferrite, permalloy and other available magnetic core materials. The core may be substantially centrally located within coil **101** with a generally cylindrical shape or may be off-center in particular applications with a differing or similar shape.

In some embodiments, permanent magnets (not shown) may be integrated in, placed on the surface of, or otherwise placed in proximity to coil **101** to provide a static magnetic field that is cumulative with the time varying electromagnetic field produced when coil **101** is energized (as shown in FIG. **2**). Although a single coil **101** is shown in FIG. **1**, it is contemplated that two or more independently or synchronously energized coils may also be used that are distributed symmetrically or asymmetrically about a central axis of the candle device (e.g., an axis that extends upward through the first and second stage housings **102**, **104** and in some cases through pendulums or pendulum members **111**, **121**) so as to produce more complex magnetic fields; however, this complexity and attempt to explicitly control the magnetic field shape may offer diminishing returns or even detrimentally effect the convincing result produced by the single coil implementation shown in FIG. **1**.

In operation, coil **101** is energized by a time-varying electric current to produce a time-varying magnetic field, M_1 , in the vicinity of coil **101**. In some embodiments, core material is used to focus and direct the magnetic field that is produced and to alter the power requirements for the operation of the present invention. In the same or other embodiments, permanent magnets are used in or near the coil **101** to superimpose a static magnetic field on top of the time-varying field, M_1 , created by energizing coil **101**. The additional static magnetic field may be used to alter power requirements as well as to selectively modify or define the shape of the magnetic field, M_1 , in the vicinity of coil **101**.

The first stage **103** serves to translate the time varying electromagnetic field, M_1 , produced by coil **101** into kinetic motion, $D1_{Kinetic}$. The first stage **103** is positioned such that at least its base is within the electromagnetic field, M_1 , produced from coil **101** and elements within first stage **103** are magnetically coupled to coil **101** when its electromagnetic field, M_1 , is present. Specifically, a magnet **114** positioned or mounted at a lower end of pendulum or first stage pendulum member **111** is within the time varying electromagnetic field, M_1 . Magnet **114** is preferably a small permanent magnet with sufficient magnetic field strength to be moved in response to either repulsive or attractive forces resulting from interaction with the time varying electromagnetic field, M_1 , produced by coil **101** such that the pendulum member **111** is displaced in a random or kinetic manner as shown at with arrows $D1_{Kinetic}$. For example, the pendulum member **111** may have an elongate body such as a thin planar design with a rectangular, elliptical, or other shape that may be formed of plastic or other non-ferrous material (e.g., a plastic rectangle with a width of about 0.25 to 2 inch width, a length of about 0.5 to 4 inches, and a thickness of 0.2 inches or less). The displacement, $D1_{Kinetic}$, may vary widely to practice the invention but may be a random pattern with movements of up to 0.5 inches or more in any direction from an origin or at rest position.

While the present invention operates with any polar alignment of magnet **114**, the polar alignment of magnet **114** and that of the electromagnetic field produced by coil **101** is coordinated or selected to produce desired results or kinetic movement/displacement, $D1_{Kinetic}$, of the lower or first stage pendulum member **111**. For example, when coil **101** produces a north pole facing upward then aligning magnet **114** (which

may be termed as a first or lower magnet of the lower pendulum member herein) with a south pole facing downward will increase the net attractive coupling force, whereas aligning magnet **114** with a north pole facing downward will increase the net repulsive coupling force, and either arrangement may be useful in some embodiments of the device **100**. Aligning magnet **114** at an angle will have a predictable effect on the mix between attractive and repulsive coupling forces and may be suitable or desirable in particular applications. Rare earth permanent magnets, ferrite magnets, ceramic magnets and the like are suitable for magnet **114**. It is also possible to replace magnet **114** with a ferrous material that is attractively coupled to the electromagnetic field.

First stage or lower housing **102** may be generally tubular in shape with a sidewall defining an interior space or void for containing the lower pendulum member **111** and an interaction space or area for the magnetic field/forces, M_1 , and the lower magnet **114** of pendulum member **111**. The housing **102** may have a sidewall formed of plastic, glass, ceramic, molded epoxy, or other material that can be formed into a desired shape for the particular application. Housing **102** may in some cases, include metal, however, some metals may affect the electromagnetic field. Housing **102** may be open at each end as shown or on one end, or, in some cases, it may be sealed at upper and/or lower ends with a magnetically permeable material such as glass, plastic, or the like. First stage or lower housing **102** may be sealed with a vacuum and/or may be sealed and contain air or fluid so as to manipulate or control the damping of pendulum **111** to obtain a desired responsive kinetic or random displacement/motion, $D1_{Kinetic}$, in response to the input magnetic field, M_1 , from coil **101**. In some cases, the first stage housing **102**, pendulum **111**, and the support **113** may also be considered or called a coupling member that is provided in the drive mechanism or motion engine **101** (or coupled to such mechanism, engine, or coil), and, additionally, the second pendulum member **121** along with its flame silhouette **125** may be considered a flame body.

Lower or first stage pendulum member **111** is pivotally mounted within or pivotally supported by a support element provided within first stage housing **102**. Such pivotal support may be provided in a variety of ways to allow the pendulum to be kinetically displaced, $D1_{Kinetic}$, about the pivot point or mounting location. For example, but not as a limitation, the pendulum member **111** may have a pivot hole **112** formed to allow a pendulum support **113**, such as a rod, axle, wire, string, or the like, to pass through. In some embodiments, the support **113** is flexible and/or has a range or span of travel to allow it to move with the pivotally supported member **111**, e.g., a string or thread that is flexible and is able to move side-to-side some amount (not completely taut) to introduce more chaotic movement to the lower pendulum member **111**. For example, the support element **113** may be a flexible wire, line, or thread with a length greater than a diameter of the housing (or the distance between the sidewalls of housing **102**) such that it has a bit of play or slack that allows it to move in any direction from an at rest or original position (e.g., move 360 degrees from an at rest position a distance or displacement such as up to 0.5 inches or more but often less than about 0.25 inches). In other embodiments, though, it is preferable that the support element **113** is rigid or semi-rigid and does not move with the pendulum member **111**.

Hole **112** is formed in the upper half of pendulum **111** such that more of the mass of pendulum **111** is below the pivot hole **112** than is above pivot hole **112** (e.g., at 0.1 to 0.45 times the length of the pendulum member **111** as measured from the top edge or the like). Note, as the location of pivot point approaches equilibrium near the center of pendulum **111**,

pendulum **111** becomes increasingly unstable and exhibits increasingly chaotic motion. With this in mind, in the exemplary embodiment shown in FIG. 1, the pivot point or location of hole **112** is moved upward with respect to the midpoint of pendulum **111** (e.g., in the range of 0.1 to 0.3 of the pendulum length), which increases stability and decreases the movement, $D1_{Kinetic}$, of the flame illusion, but this positioning of the pivot point or hole **112** decreases the range of motion of the upper end of pendulum **111**, which may be desirable in some embodiments. The location of pivot point **112** can be selected to meet the needs of a particular application. This arrangement allows pendulum **111** to hang in a stable position absent the affects of the electromagnetic field and allows gravity to act on the mass of pendulum member **111** and lower magnet **114** attached to pendulum **111**. Other mechanisms, such as a gimbal or other joint(s) allowing multi-axis movement may be used as an alternative to the pivotal mounting provided by the combination of the pivot hole **112** and support element **113**.

Pendulum support wire **113** is attached to the walls of housing **102** for support at locations selected to place pendulum **111** generally in the center of the hollow space defined by walls of housing **102** so that support wire **113** spans a diameter when housing **102** has a circular cross section. In some preferred embodiments, support element **113** may include a rigid or semi-rigid wire such as a steel or steel alloy wire or rod and is preferably bent to form a low spot at a location where it is desired for pendulum **111** to rest (e.g., the mounting locations for the ends of the wire **113** may be about 0.1 to 0.5 or more inches above the low, center point or pivotal supporting portion of the wire **113**). Hole **112** in pendulum member **111** is sufficiently larger than the diameter of support wire **112** such that pendulum **111** swings or pivots freely about support wire **113** but at the same time is held in generally the same location and orientation unless pendulum **111** is perturbed by the electromagnetic field, M_1 . In this manner, the top portion of pendulum member **111** is able to move back and forth with pendulum movement, $D1_{Kinetic}$, within a generally cone-shaped extent having hole **112** as an apex, as well as flutter.

A small permanent magnet **115**, which may be similar in composition and alignment to magnet **114**, is positioned at the upper end of pendulum **111**, e.g., between the hole **112** and an upper side or edge of the pendulum member **111**. Pendulum member **111** is sized with respect to housing **102** such that it moves freely within housing **102** about the pivot location defined by the apex, dip, low point, or valley in support wire **113**. In the particular embodiment, the length of pendulum **111** is selected such that when assembled as shown in FIG. 1 the lower portion of pendulum **111** is above the lowest portion of wall **102** and the upper portion of pendulum **111** is below the highest portion of wall **102**. This arrangement inhibits or prevents the mechanical interaction between elements in the first and second stages **103** and **105** as well as mechanical interaction between pendulum **111** and coil **101**. Although some mechanical interaction can be tolerated, by preventing mechanical interaction the end result or kinetic flame effect is believed to be smoother while more kinetic/random and realistic.

In operation the electromagnetic field causes magnet **114** to move either repulsively or attractively. That motion, $D1_{Kinetic}$, is translated through pendulum **111** to which magnet **114** is affixed. The extent of motion of the lower end of pendulum **111** is greater than the extent of motion of the upper end of pendulum **111** to a degree determined by the position of hole **112** (e.g., $D1_{Kinetic}$ for the pendulum **111** may be thought of as having a lower component that is greater than an

upper component such as two to four times as much in the lower component or the like). Gravity tends to return pendulum **111** to an upright position whereas the time varying electromagnetic field, M_1 , may continuously perturb pendulum **111** and may be used to prevent a steady state return to the upright position. In a particular example of using a sinusoidal varying electromagnetic field, pendulum **111** dances about quite energetically and in random directions with varying magnitudes of displacement, $D1_{Kinetic}$.

Air resistance acting on the surface area of pendulum **111** damps the motion of pendulum **111**. Accordingly, the size and shape of pendulum **111** can be altered to provide the speed and degree of kinetic movement desired for a particular application. In some embodiments, air resistance is controlled by using a more irregular shape such as an hour glass shaped member **111** and in other cases air dampening is controlled by providing one or more mesh or porous sections to allow air flow through the body of member **111**. In other cases, the lower portion of the pendulum member **111** may be made heavier with more surface area/mass or with addition of weights to achieve a desired and tunable kinetic movement/displacement, $D1_{Kinetic}$, of the member **111**.

Second stage **105** comprises a housing **104** that preferably has a composition and size that is substantially similar to housing **102** so that the stages **103** and **105** (or the corresponding houses **102**, **104**) can be mated or coupled together to form a candle or device body with solitary or unitary appearance. Second stage **105** generally serves to couple to the kinetic energy in the moving upper end of pendulum **111** and translate that kinetic energy into motion of flame silhouette element or extension **125**. The construction and operation of second stage **105** is similar to that of first stage **103**. Upper stage pendulum member **121**, which is slightly shorter than the length of housing **104**, is pivotally mounted via a pivot hole **122** on a pendulum support element **123**, e.g., a rigid or semi-rigid wire or the like in some embodiments with a lower supporting portion or area in the center of the element **123**. The support element **123** is mounted at each end to the sidewall of the housing **104** (such as at the upper edges of the sidewall at opposite locations to stretch across the space or void defined within the sidewall of housing **104**). A first or lower magnet **124** (similar in composition, size, and alignment to the first or lower magnet **114** of the first stage pendulum member **111** and second or upper magnet **115** of the first stage pendulum member as described hereinbefore) is mounted at a lower (or first) portion or end of pendulum member **121**. Magnet **124** is positioned so as to be magnetically coupled to magnet **115** or influence by magnetic field or forces, M_2 . The magnetic coupling, M_2 , is preferably repulsive, but it may also be attractive or a mix between attractive and repulsive coupling. For example, in one useful implementation, the magnetic couplings are attractive, and gravity is used to bring the pendulum members back to a central or neutral position. In use, the coil in such a case may provide a donut shaped magnetic field such that attractive magnetic coupling provides an auto-start upon power up as it moves the nearby pendulum away from the neutral position.

Flame silhouette element **125** comprises a flat or dimensional body of material preferably formed with a flame-shaped outline or peripheral pattern. Flame silhouette element **125** extends outward from an edge or side of the upper (or second) portion/end of the second stage pendulum member **121**. Element **125** may include a sheet of material such as paper or plastic and/or is formed of the same or differing material as the body of pendulum member **121**. Flame silhouette element **125** may be two dimensional or a distorted sheet material that extends in three dimensions, or may be a fully

three dimensional object. The mass and air resistance of flame silhouette 125 adds to the mass and air resistance of pendulum 121 and so its configuration is typically taken into consideration when locating pivot hole 122 relative to the upper or second end of the pendulum member 121.

In operation, the magnetic field, M_2 , produced by magnet 115 causes magnet 124 to move either repulsively or attractively. That motion is translated through pendulum 121 to which flame silhouette 125 is affixed as shown with second kinetic or random motion or displacement, $D2_{Kinetic}$. As with the pendulum member 111 of the first stage 103, the extent or magnitude of motion or kinetic displacement of the lower end of pendulum 121 is greater than the extent of motion of the upper end of pendulum 121 to a degree determined by the position of hole 122 relative to the edge of the upper portion of pendulum 121 (e.g., the kinetic displacement, $D2_{Kinetic}$, has a larger component in the lower or first end/portion of the pendulum 121 than in the upper or second end/portion of the pendulum 121 such as 2 to 4 times as much movement or the like in the lower or first end/portion). In one embodiment, the first stage or lower pendulum member 111 is longer ranging while the upper pendulum 121 is shorter ranging, and this may be controlled by selecting the distance of each of these pendulum members 111, 121 from their pivot point (e.g., make the lower pendulum 111 have more movement by having pivot hole 112 farther away from magnet/ferromagnetic material component 114 that pivot hole 122 from component 124).

In some embodiments, pivot hole 122 is provided at a location comparable to the base of a wick in a combustion candle (e.g., 0.1 to 1 inch or more below upper lip or edge of the second stage housing 104). Gravity tends to return pendulum 121 to an upright position whereas the magnetic influence, M_2 , of moving magnet 115 continuously perturbs pendulum 121 and inhibits a steady state return to the upright position. Air resistance acting on the surface area of pendulum member 121 and flame silhouette element 125 damps the motion, $D2_{Kinetic}$, of pendulum member 121. Accordingly, the size and shape of pendulum member 121 can be altered to provide the speed and degree of kinetic movement, $D2_{Kinetic}$, desired for a particular application or embodiment of device 100. Note, that the components 114, 115, 124 may be magnets or ferromagnetic material with one embodiment providing a ferromagnetic tag for element 114 and then a ferromagnetic tag for element 115 or 124 while another embodiment uses a magnet for element 114 and ferromagnetic material for element 115 or 124 (e.g., only one of each magnetic coupling pair of components is a magnet to provide desired driving forces).

Although the arrangement described hereinbefore produces kinetic motion in flame silhouette 125, it is not this motion or the shape of element 125 alone that produces a convincing flame simulation. The nature of the light reflected from or produced by the device 100 is also significant in producing the convincing effect, not the motion and shape of its elements. To this end, some embodiments of the device 100 may include a flame silhouette element 125 that is shaped as a simple geometrical shape such as a triangle, circle, or arbitrary shape to produce a desirable effect while the illustrated element 125 has a shape or peripheral pattern similar to a candle or solitary flame.

In the particular implementation 100 of FIG. 1, a spotlight 107 mounted above flame silhouette 125 is aimed to direct light 108 toward the element 125 to produce a spot of light 127 on the surface of flame silhouette element 125. One or more light sources 107 may be used, and, when used, the multiple light sources may be aligned so that their produced

spots of light 127 are aligned with each other in the vicinity of silhouette element 125 even as silhouette element 125 moves in normal operation with the kinetic movement, $D2_{Kinetic}$, of upper or second stage pendulum member 121.

Light source 107 includes, for example, a light emitting diode(s) (LED(s)) or other efficient low power light source coupled with a converging lens to optically direct the produced light into a desired size and shape. An incandescent light, organic light emitting diode (OLED), or other device is also suitable for light source 107. Alternatively, a narrow beam light source, even a laser, may be used with a diverging lens to produce the desired shape and size of light spot 107, e.g., a shape similar to the pattern/shape of the element 125 and size similar to or smaller than the element 125 to control blow by. The light source 107 may also include fiber optic light pipes to transport light from a remote light-emitting device to a desired location and angle. Light source 107 may project downward as shown in FIG. 1, or upward, or at any angle to meet the needs of a particular application or implementation of device 100. In some cases, flame silhouette 125 can be bent slightly out of a vertical alignment or alignment with pendulum 121 so as to reflect light from light source 107 to an expected location of a viewer.

Light source 107 may be colored using a colored light source or filters. Light source 107 may comprise multiple light sources to produce several colors, and the light sources may be energized statically or dynamically to provide color variation. These types of controlled light production may enhance the effect of the present invention but are not necessary in most instances and may actually detract from the effect in certain applications because, as noted hereinbefore, simulating flame effects with direct modulation and control by itself does not produce suitable results in many instances. However, as an augmentation of the basic kinetic light movement principle in accordance with the present invention such direct manipulation and control of the light output may produce desirable results in particular applications.

Alternatively, or in addition, the surface of flame silhouette 125 is colored with a single color, gradient color, or a color pattern including yellows, oranges, reds, and/or blues used alone, together, or in addition to white light emitting devices in source 107. In some cases, the coloring may be a fluorescent color (e.g., a day glow type color(s)) to achieve a desired result such as a feel of heat or raised temperature associated with a real flame). White or colored light spot 127 on element 125 reflects light having a color dependent on both the color of the light produced by light source 107 and the color of the surface of silhouette element 125 where the light spot 127 falls. As silhouette element 125 moves in space with kinetic displacement, $D2_{Kinetic}$, of pendulum member 121, its angle with respect to light source 107 continuously changes and, in response or concurrently, the intensity of the reflected light changes in a complex, kinetic manner. This effect can be modified when silhouette element 125 is distorted or three dimensional in configuration. To get front and back lighting with one source 107, the element 125 (and its coloring/materials) may be chosen such that a portion of the received light 108 is reflected and a portion is allowed to pass through to an opposite or back side. For example, the texture, color, and/or material of the element 125 may be such that about 40 to 60 percent of the light (e.g., about half) is reflected while the remaining light (e.g., about half) is passed through with the element 125 being at least partially translucent. In this manner, both the front and back of the display element 125 is lighted by light 108 from a single source 107.

FIG. 2 schematically illustrates a simple drive device 200 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention

such as for use with kinetic flame device **100** (with components of flame device **100** having like numbers in drive **200**). In the implementation of FIG. **2**, a power source **201** is provided that may include batteries, an AC/DC power supply, solar power supply, or a combination or variant thereof that produces power of sufficient voltage, current, and frequency content for use by light source or engine **107** and signal generator **203**. In some exemplary embodiments, both light engine **107** and signal generator **203** are driven by direct current and are not explicitly managed or controlled. Alternatively, a controller circuit (not shown) may be included and operated to vary the output to light engine **107** and/or signal generator **203** to produce varied results.

In one embodiment, signal generator **203** generates a sinusoidal output in the exemplary embodiments, but, in other cases, it may produce a square wave, pulse modulated, amplitude modulated, frequency modulated, or other output form with expected effect on the electromagnetic field, M_1 , produced by coil **101**. In one preferred embodiment, the generator **203** provides a square wave that is intermittently interrupted (e.g., every so many pulses (such as 32 pulses) it drops off and then restarts after a pause/interruption to enhance the chaotic effect). In another exemplary implementation, signal generator **203** is similar to a conventional clock circuit producing a 60 Hz sinusoidal output coupled to coil **101**. When multiple coils **101** are used, signal generator **203** may be adapted to produce multiple outputs that may be synchronous or asynchronous. It is contemplated that when power source **201** is coupled to AC mains or a line source that a simple transformer may be used to produce a desired waveform for coil **101** and eliminate need for signal generator **203**.

FIG. **3** and FIG. **4** show an alternative embodiment of kinematic flame device **300** in which a mechanism in accordance with the present invention is embodied in a form factor that is compatible with standard light fixtures with standard light sockets. As such, the embodiment **300** shown in FIG. **3** and FIG. **4** enables a screw-in replacement for conventional bulbs that transform a conventional lighting fixture into a flickering candle-like flame appearance. FIG. **3** and FIG. **4** show the same embodiment of device **300** from perspectives that differ approximately orthogonally. Like numbered elements correspond to similar elements in the two figures. In general, the materials, construction and operation of the embodiment shown in FIG. **3** and FIG. **4** are analogous to that described in reference to the stand-alone candle implantation of FIG. **1** (e.g., with interaction of magnets and an electrically generated magnetic field used to create a first kinematic motion/displacement that is then passed to a second stage pendulum member via interaction between two permanent magnets).

A bulb base **305** is configured to electrically couple to a light socket such as a standard screw-in type bulb base. However, the invention is readily adapted to other types of bulb bases including two prong press fit, bayonet, candelabra base, miniature screw, and varieties of bases used for halogen and low voltage lighting systems. Housing **302** comprises a transparent or translucent material such as plastic or glass and is used to provide the first and second stages described with reference to device **100** of FIG. **1**. Unlike conventional bulbs it is not necessary to maintain reduced pressure within the bulb (within housing **302**), so a wider variety of materials and construction technology can be used for the present invention as compared to conventional bulb technology. However, it may be desirable in some implementations to contain a gas within housing **302** or its sidewall(s) or to contain reduced pressure within bulb **302**. In such an embodiment of device **300**, an air-tight seal between base **305** and housing **302** may

be provided. Housing **302** (or its at least translucent sidewall (s)) may be coated with a colored film, fluorescent or phosphorescent film, or other coating either in whole or in part, in a gradient, as well as in a regular or irregular pattern to meet the needs of a particular application **300**.

Although not shown in FIG. **3** and FIG. **4**, devices to implement the functionality of power source **201** and signal generator **203** can be embedded in base **305**. A typical embodiment in accordance with the invention uses low power as compared to conventional light bulbs, and the components necessary to implement that functionality can be very small and readily assembled within or integrated with base **305** and coupled to drive coil **301**. Lower or first stage pendulum member **311** moves about a pendulum support **312** that extends through hole **313** in member **311**. The pendulum member **311** has a lower magnet **314** and an upper magnet **315** that are analogous in position, function, composition, and construction to lower magnet **114** and upper magnet **115** described in reference to FIG. **1**. Operation of pendulum member **311** is analogous to the movement and operation of pendulum **111** shown in FIG. **1**, with lower magnet **314** being driven by magnetic field, M_1 , by coil/components embedded in base **305**. A magnetic field, M_2 , produced by upper or second magnet **315** is coupled via field, M_2 , to a lower magnet **324** on upper pendulum member **321**. Upper pendulum **321** is attached to or integrated with a flame silhouette **325** and operates in a manner akin to upper pendulum **121** in FIG. **1** with a support element **322** extending through hole **323** to pivotally mount the pendulum member **321**.

In operation, a light source **307** such as an LED receives power from conductors (not shown) running up from power supply **201** in base **305**. These conductors may run along the interior or exterior wall of housing **302**. Light output from light source **307** is formed into a spot of desired size and directed downward onto a surface of flame silhouette **325** (as discussed, for example, with reference to device **100**) such as with lens/concentrator **317**. Alternatively, the light output from light source **307** can be redirected using reflectors formed on the interior surface of housing **302** so that the light reflects and is directed towards flame silhouette **325** at an angle. Light source **307** may also be located in base **305** and directed upward either directly or using reflectors to form a spot on the surface of flame silhouette **325**. For example, by making the upper end of housing **302** reflective with a parabolic or other convex shape it will have a focal point at which can be adjusted to occur at a location where the light spot is desired. A relatively diffuse light source **307** located in the vicinity of base **305** will transmit diffuse light upward which is then concentrated into a spot occurring at flame silhouette **325**.

FIG. **5** and FIG. **6** show an alternative embodiment in which a mechanism/device **500** in accordance with the present invention is embodied in a form factor that is compatible with standard light fixtures with standard light sockets, but in which the mechanism **500** is arranged so that the base **505** is above the kinetic movement mechanism (first and second stage arrangement for transmitting kinetic motion via magnetic field interactions through pivotally mounted pendulum members) that provides driving motion of a flame silhouette element **525**. FIG. **5** and FIG. **6** show the same embodiment from perspectives that differ approximately orthogonally. Like numbered elements correspond to similar elements in FIG. **5** and FIG. **6**. Like the embodiment shown in FIG. **3** and FIG. **4**, the embodiments of FIG. **5** and FIG. **6** desirably enable a screw-in replacement for conventional bulbs that transform a conventional lighting fixture into a flickering candle-like flame appearance. In general, the mate-

rials, construction and operation of the embodiment shown in FIG. 5 and FIG. 6 are analogous to that described in reference to the stand-alone candle implantation of FIG. 1 and the bulb implementations of FIG. 3 and FIG. 4.

A bulb base 505 is configured to electrically couple to a light socket such as a standard screw in type bulb base, although the invention is readily adapted to other types of bulb bases including two prong press fit, bayonet, candelabra base, miniature screw as well as varieties of bases used for halogen and low voltage lighting systems. Housing 502 includes a transparent or translucent material such as plastic or glass. Unlike conventional bulbs it is not necessary to maintain reduced pressure within the bulb housing 502, so a wider variety of materials and construction technology can be used for the present invention as compared to conventional bulb technology. However, it may be desirable in some implementations to contain a gas, or to contain reduced pressure within bulb 502 in which case an airtight seal between base 505 and housing 502 may be provided. Housing 502 may be coated with a colored film, fluorescent or phosphorescent film, or other coating either in whole or in part, in a gradient, as well as in a regular or irregular pattern to meet the needs of a particular application.

Devices to implement the functionality of power source 201 and signal generator 203 may be embedded in base 505 in some embodiments, e.g., to selectively generate driving magnetic field, M_1 . A typical embodiment 500 in accordance with the invention uses low power as compared to conventional light bulbs, and the components necessary to implement that functionality can be very small and readily assembled within or integrated with base 505 and coupled to drive coil 501. First stage pendulum 511 moves about a pendulum support 512 extending through hole 513 to pivotally mount or support pendulum 511. The pendulum 511 has a first or "lower" magnet 514 and a second or "upper" magnet 515 that are analogous in position, function, composition and construction to lower magnet 114 and upper magnet 115 described in reference to FIG. 1, e.g., first magnet 514 interacts with magnetic field, M_1 , to create kinetic displacement or motion, $D1_{Kinetic}$, of pendulum 511. Operation of pendulum 511 is analogous to the movement and operation of pendulum 111 shown in FIG. 1. A magnetic field, M_2 , produced by upper magnet 515 is coupled to a lower magnet 524 on upper pendulum 521 to cause it to move chaotically or with kinetic/random displacement or motion, $D2_{Kinetic}$. Upper pendulum 521 is attached to or integrated with a flame silhouette element 525 and operates in a manner akin to upper pendulum 121 in FIG. 1 as it is pivotally mounted via hole 523 through which support element 522 extends. Flame silhouette element 525 may include an inverted cone that may be, for example, hollow blow molded part (e.g., a 3D body in this example).

In operation, a light source 507 such as an LED receives power from conductors (not shown) running down from power supply 201 in base 505. These conductors may run along the interior or exterior wall of housing 302. Light output from light source 507 is formed, such as by lens/concentrator 517, into a spot 518 of desired size and directed upward onto a surface of flame silhouette 525. Alternatively, the light output from light source 507 can be redirected using reflectors (not shown) formed on the interior surface of housing 502 so that the light reflects and is directed towards flame silhouette 525 at an angle. Light source 307 may also be located in base 305 and directed downward either directly or using reflectors to form a spot on the surface of flame silhouette element 525.

The present invention is amenable to many variations in implementation to meet the needs of a particular application.

The form factor, for example, can be altered to serve as a nightlight, table light, wall sconce, or any form factor where a flickering flame light output is desired. The invention may be applied in fixed and portable outdoor lighting, ceiling mounted fixtures, wall mount fixtures, landscape lighting, holiday lighting, handheld lighting, and the like. Additionally, a number of the kinetic flame elements as shown as 100 in FIG. 1 may be driven by a single assembly that includes a signal generator and power source and that may be plugged into a wall socket or other power source.

Multiple light sources may be used, and the effect in accordance with the present invention may be enhanced by light sources on or in the flame silhouette element to directly emit light in addition to or in place of light projected onto the silhouette element. Other optical elements may be included in the light path from the light source such as scattering devices, reflectors and masks to shape the light source. Similarly, the device housing can be augmented with scattering devices, reflectors, and masks to alter the light reflected from the flame silhouette.

In one embodiment, the kinetic flame assembly 100 is positioned within an outer housing or cup that supports the first and second stage housings 102, 104. These housings may be replaced by a single internal support such as a candle-shaped column that may be useful when the outer housing or cup is formed of optically clear/translucent material such that the "candle" is visible to a user, and the candle-shaped support may have an inner shaft or channel in which the pendulums 111, 121 are supported as shown in FIG. 1 or at some offset, e.g., the support 123 may be rotated relative to the support 113 such these supports 113, 123 are not generally parallel but are at some angular offset such as being transverse or even orthogonal when viewed from above or below. In some implementations, the magnetic/ferromagnetic tags/components 114, 115, 124 are provided on the body of the pendulums 111, 121 while in some cases it may be useful to have these extend from the pendulum bodies such as by having a magnet holder that is rigidly or pivotally supported by a bottom portion of the upper pendulum 121 or the like. The light source 107 may be an LED or similar device and one or more lenses may be positioned between the light source 107 and the flame 125 to shape the light 108 to achieve a particular effect (e.g., to be about the size and/or shape of the flame 127). The cup/outer housing may include a valance above the candle-shaped column to support the light source/lens 107 and to also hide these from view from a user (e.g., this valance may be opaque such as with a decorative chrome or other exterior coloring so as to disguise the presence of light source 107).

I claim:

1. An apparatus for simulating a flame, comprising:
 - a housing including an interior space with a first stage and a second stage;
 - a drive mechanism generating a time varying electromagnetic field that extends into the first stage;
 - a first stage pendulum member pivotally mounted within the interior space of the first stage, the first stage pendulum member including a first magnet on a first end and a second magnet on a second end, wherein the first end of the first stage pendulum member is positioned proximate to the drive mechanism, whereby the first magnet interacts with the time varying electromagnetic field;
 - a second stage pendulum member pivotally mounted within the interior space of the second stage, the second stage pendulum member including a magnet on a first end positioned proximate to the second end of the first stage pendulum member, wherein the second stage pen-

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dulum member further includes a flame silhouette element extending from a second end of the second stage pendulum member; and

a light source adapted to selectively transmit light onto the flame silhouette element.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first and second magnets of the first stage pendulum member and the magnet of the second stage pendulum member each comprise permanent magnets.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the drive mechanism comprises a coil of wire and a signal generator providing time-varying current to the coil to create the time-varying magnetic field.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein, in response to the interacting between the first magnet and the time-varying magnetic field, the first stage pendulum member is displaced in a random pattern over time.

5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein, in response to the displacement of the first stage pendulum member in the random pattern, the second stage pendulum member is displaced in another random pattern, whereby the flame silhouette element has kinetic motion concurrently with receiving the light from the light source.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first and second stage pendulum members each comprise an elongated body, wherein the body of the first stage pendulum member is pivotally supported by a first support element at a first location proximate to the second end of the first stage pendulum member, and wherein the body of the second stage pendulum member is pivotally supported by a second support element at a second location proximate to the second end of the second stage pendulum member.

7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the first support member includes a rigid body that extends across the interior space of the housing and through a hole at the first location in the first stage pendulum member and wherein the second support member includes a rigid body that extends across the interior space of the housing and through a hole at the second location in the first stage pendulum member.

8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the first location in the first stage pendulum member is disposed between the first and second magnets and more proximate to the second magnet than to the first magnet.

9. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the first and second support members each extend, at a central portion mating with the first and second stage pendulum members, respectively, a distance toward the drive mechanism.

10. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a base mated with the housing adjacent the first stage, wherein the base houses the drive mechanism and wherein the base is configured to electrically couple to a light socket to provide a power source for the drive mechanism and for the light source.

11. A kinetic flame device, comprising:

a housing with a sidewall defining an interior space with a first stage and a second stage;

an elongated, first pendulum member with a first permanent magnet positioned near a first end and second permanent magnet positioned near a second end, wherein the first pendulum member is pivotally mounted within the first stage;

an elongated, second pendulum member with a third permanent magnet positioned near a first end and a flame silhouette element extending from a second end, wherein the second pendulum member is pivotally mounted within the second stage of the housing with the

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first end of the second pendulum member spaced apart and proximate to the second end of the first pendulum member;

during an operating time period, a coil providing a time-varying magnetic field within a portion of the first stage containing the first end of the first pendulum member; and

a light source directing light toward the flame silhouette element.

12. The kinetic flame device of claim 11, wherein the time-varying magnetic field applies displacement forces to the first permanent magnet causing the first pendulum member to be displaced from an at rest position with kinetic motion during the operating time period.

13. The kinetic flame device of claim 12, wherein the second permanent magnet generates a second magnetic field, wherein the third permanent magnetic field is positioned within the second magnetic field during at least a portion of the operating time period such that the second and third permanent magnets interact, wherein, in response to the interaction of the second and third permanent magnets, the second pendulum member is displaced with kinetic motion, and wherein the first pendulum member has a first range of movement that is greater than a second range of movement of the second pendulum member.

14. The kinetic flame device of claim 11, further comprising first and second support elements, wherein the first support element comprises a rigid body extending across the interior space within the first stage and through a hole provided in the first pendulum member, and wherein the second support element comprises a rigid body extending across the interior space within the second stage and through a hole provided in the second pendulum member.

15. The kinetic flame device of claim 14, wherein the first and the second pendulum members are spaced apart from the sidewall and wherein the second end of the first pendulum member is spaced apart from the first end of the second pendulum member, whereby the first pendulum member is driven through a first random pattern by the time-varying magnetic field and the second pendulum member is driven through a second random pattern differing from the first random pattern free of contact with the sidewall and between the first and second pendulum members.

16. A flame simulator, comprising:

an electrically driven motion engine including a coupling member, wherein the motion engine generates chaotic motion at the coupling member in at least two dimensions;

a movable flame body magnetically coupled to the coupling member such that the chaotic motion of the coupling member is transferred to the movable flame body, and

a light projector emitting a spot of light towards the flame body,

wherein the motion engine further comprises:

a hollow housing a sidewall defining a first end and a second end;

an electromagnetic coil proximate to the first end of the housing;

a drive circuit coupled to the coil and providing a signal to the drive coil to produce a time-varying magnetic field in a vicinity of the drive coil;

a support wire spanning across the housing and affixed to the housing sidewall wherein the support wire is V-shaped so that a vertex of the support wire is near a midpoint of the housing, wherein the support wire is

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located at a position along the sidewall that is closer to the second end than to the first end; and
 a pendulum having a hole, wherein the support wire passes through the hole allowing the pendulum to pivot about the hole on the support wire.

17. The flame simulator of claim 16, wherein the flame body has a visible surface for receiving the spot of light and wherein the flame body and the light source are arranged such that light emitted from the light source is reflected from the visible surface of the flame body towards a viewer.

18. The flame simulator of claim 16, wherein the signal is a square wave signal or a sine wave signal and wherein the pendulum has a first end proximate to the first end of the housing and a second end proximate to the second end of the housing, wherein the pendulum is supported in the housing such that the first and second ends are contained within the housing.

19. The flame simulator of claim 18, wherein the pendulum is balanced on the support wire with more than about half of its mass on the first-end side of the hole.

20. The flame simulator of claim 18, wherein the motion engine further comprises:

a first magnetic region located on the first end of the pendulum and at a location that is influenced by the varying electromagnetic field; and

a second magnetic region located on the second end of the pendulum, wherein the second magnetic region forms the coupling member.

21. The flame simulator of claim 16, further comprising a magnetic core positioned to shape the electromagnetic field produced by the coil.

22. A flame simulator, comprising:

an electrically driven motion engine including a coupling member, wherein the motion engine generates chaotic motion at the coupling member in at least two dimensions; a movable flame body magnetically coupled to the coupling member such that the chaotic motion of the coupling member is transferred to the movable flame body; a light projector emitting a spot of light towards the flame body;

a hollow housing having a sidewall defining a first end and a second end; and

a flame support wire spanning across the housing and affixed to the housing sidewall wherein the support wire is V-shaped so that a vertex of the support wire is near a midpoint of the housing, wherein the support wire is located at a position along the sidewall that is closer to the second end than to the first end,

wherein the flame body comprises a pendulum having a hole, wherein the flame support wire passes through the hole allowing the pendulum to pivot about the hole on the flame support wire, the pendulum having a first end proximate to the first end of the housing and a second end proximate to the second end of the housing.

23. The flame simulator of claim 22, wherein the pendulum is balanced so that more than half of its mass is on the first-end side of the hole.

24. The flame simulator of claim 22, wherein the pendulum further comprising a magnetic region located on the first end of the pendulum and at a location that is influenced by the coupling member of the motion engine; and

a flame-shaped silhouette located at the second end of the pendulum, wherein the flame-shaped silhouette forms the visible surface of the flame body.

25. The flame simulator of claim 16, wherein the light projector is positioned to emit light downward onto the flame body.

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26. The flame simulator of claim 16, wherein the light projector is positioned to emit light upward onto the flame body.

27. The flame simulator of claim 16, wherein the light projector comprises a single-color light emitting diode spot light.

28. A light bulb, comprising:

a bulb-shaped housing including an interior space with a first stage and a second stage;

a flame element pivotally mounted within the housing and having a surface operable to reflect a projected light spot;

a motion engine that moves the flame element with a time-varying magnetic field that extends into the first stage; and

a first stage pendulum member pivotally mounted within the interior space of the first stage, the first stage pendulum member including a first magnetic coupling member on a first end and a second magnetic coupling member on a second end, wherein the first end of the first stage pendulum member is positioned proximate to the motion engine, whereby the first magnetic coupling member interacts with the time varying electromagnetic field;

wherein the flame element is pivotally mounted within the interior space of the second stage, the flame element including a magnetic coupling member on a first end positioned proximate to the second end of the first stage pendulum member.

29. The light bulb of claim 28, wherein the projected light spot is produced by:

a light emitting diode (LED) light source; and

a lens positioned in an output path of light from the LED light source and operable to focus the light into a spot on the surface of the flame element.

30. The light bulb of claim 29, wherein the LED light source and the motion engine derive power when screwed into a light socket.

31. The light bulb of claim 28, wherein the flame element comprises an inverted cone.

32. The light bulb of claim 28, wherein the first and second magnetic coupling members of the first stage pendulum member and the magnetic coupling member of the flame element each comprises at least one permanent magnet.

33. The light bulb of claim 28, wherein the motion engine comprises a coil of wire and a signal generator providing time-varying current to the coil to create the time-varying magnetic field.

34. The light bulb of claim 28, wherein, in response to the interacting between the first magnetic coupling member and the time-varying magnetic field, the first stage pendulum member is displaced in a random pattern over time.

35. An apparatus for simulating a flame, comprising:

a housing including an interior space with a first stage and a second stage;

a drive mechanism generating a time varying electromagnetic field that extends into the first stage;

a first stage pendulum member pivotally mounted within the interior space of the first stage, the first stage pendulum member including a first magnetic coupling member on a first end and a second magnetic coupling member on a second end, wherein the first end of the first stage pendulum member is positioned proximate to the drive mechanism, whereby the first magnetic coupling member interacts with the time varying electromagnetic field;

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a second stage pendulum member pivotally mounted within the interior space of the second stage, the second stage pendulum member including a magnetic coupling member on a first end positioned proximate to the second end of the first stage pendulum member, wherein the second stage pendulum member further includes a flame silhouette element extending from a second end of the second stage pendulum member; and a light source adapted to selectively transmit light onto the flame silhouette element.

36. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the first and second magnetic coupling members of the first stage pendulum member and the magnetic coupling member of the second stage pendulum member each comprise at least one permanent magnet.

37. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the first and second stage pendulum members each comprise an elongated body, wherein the body of the first stage pendulum member is pivotally supported by a first support element at a first location proximate to the second end of the first stage pendulum member, and wherein the body of the second stage pendulum member is pivotally supported by a second support element at a second location proximate to the second end of the second stage pendulum member.

38. The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the first support member includes a rigid body that extends across the interior space of the housing and through a hole at the first location in the first stage pendulum member and wherein the second support member includes a rigid body that extends across the interior space of the housing and through a hole at the second location in the first stage pendulum member.

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39. The apparatus of claim 38, wherein the first location in the first stage pendulum member is disposed between the first and second magnetic coupling members and more proximate to the second magnetic coupling member than to the first magnetic coupling member.

40. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the drive mechanism comprises an electromagnetic coil proximate to the first end of the housing and a drive circuit coupled to the coil that provide a signal to the drive coil to produce a time-varying magnetic field in a vicinity of the drive coil and wherein the signal is a square wave signal or a sine wave signal.

41. The apparatus of claim 35, further comprising a support wire spanning across the housing that passes through a hole in the second stage pendulum and that is affixed to the housing sidewall, wherein the support wire is V-shaped so that a vertex of the support wire is near a midpoint of the interior space of the housing and wherein the support wire is located at a position along the sidewall that is closer to the second end than to the first end.

42. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the hollow housing has a unitary body containing the first and second stages and wherein the first and second stage pendulum members are each balanced on a support wire within the interior space with more than about half of its mass supported below the support wire.

43. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the light source is positioned within the interior space of the housing to emit light upward onto the flame silhouette element.

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