US006902302B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Foster

(10) **Patent No.: US 6,902,302 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent: Jun. 7, 2005**

(54) **GEL SCROLLER ASSEMBLY FOR A LUMINAIRE**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 29 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **10/459,892**

(22) Filed: **Jun. 12, 2003**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2004/0252504 A1 Dec. 16, 2004

(51) **Int. Cl.**[7] **F21V 33/00**
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **362/324**; 362/311; 362/321; 362/253
(58) **Field of Search** 362/311, 321, 362/324, 373, 269, 271, 293, 2, 396, 510, 513, 284, 277, 294, 232, 408, 449, 282, 319, 307, 253

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A cassette containing a gel scroll is releasably attached to the forward portion of a housing of a luminaire. A light path through the cassette is aligned with a light exit opening of the luminaire. A gel scroll is wound upon a pair of drums in the cassette and intersects the light path. The drive motor for the cassette is contained in the housing of the luminaire. A drive system for the drums includes a driven member in the cassette that engages a drive member of the luminaire driven by the motor when the cassette is mounted on the luminaire. A fan in the luminaire moves cooling air through the cassette when the cassette is mounted on the luminaire.

15 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets

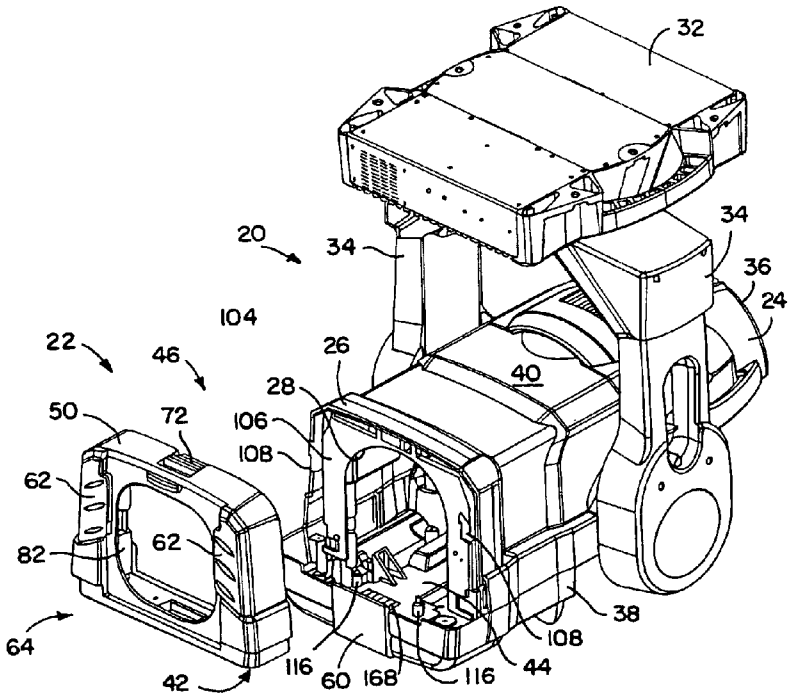


FIG. 1

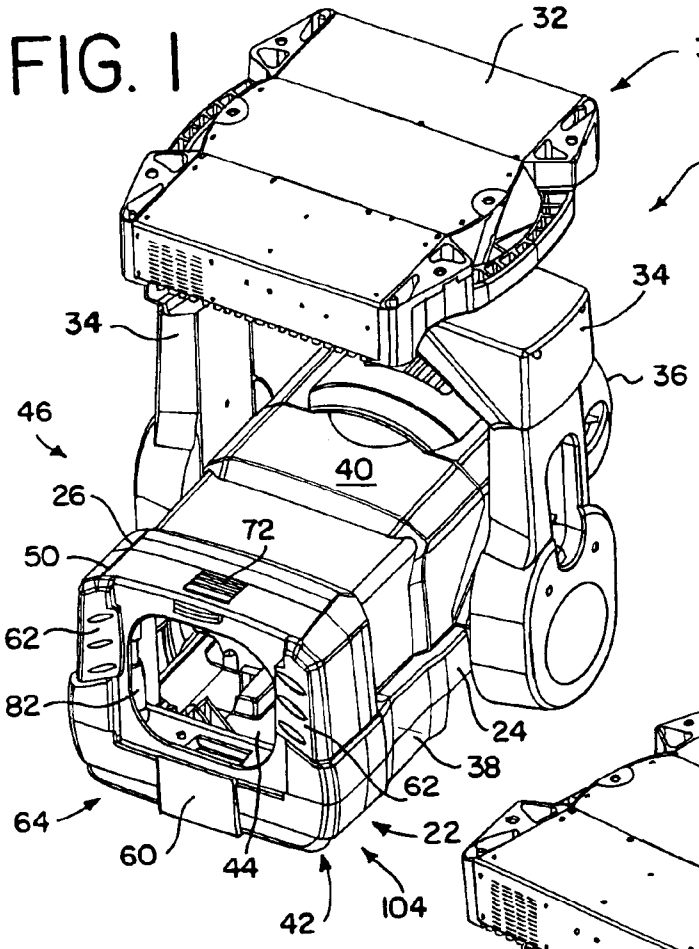


FIG. 3

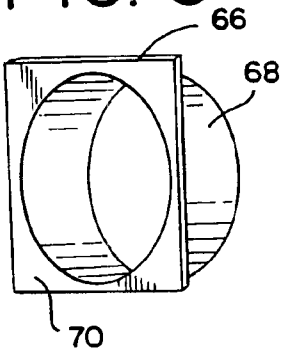
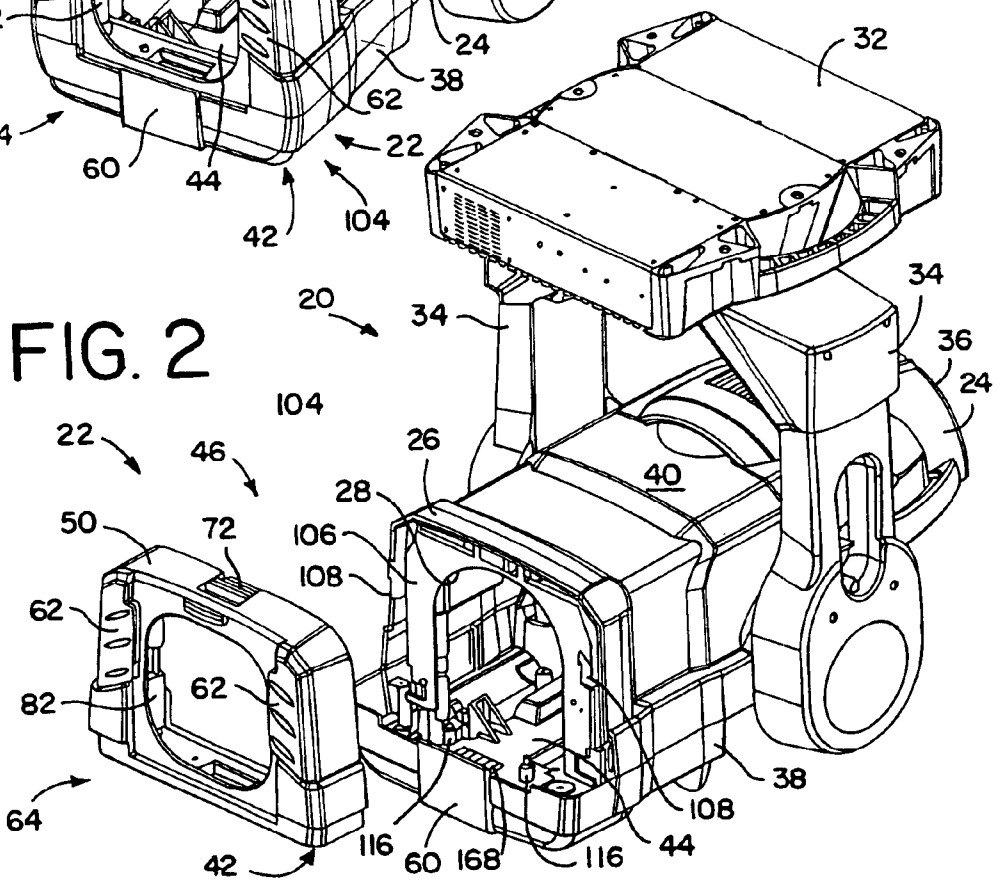


FIG. 2



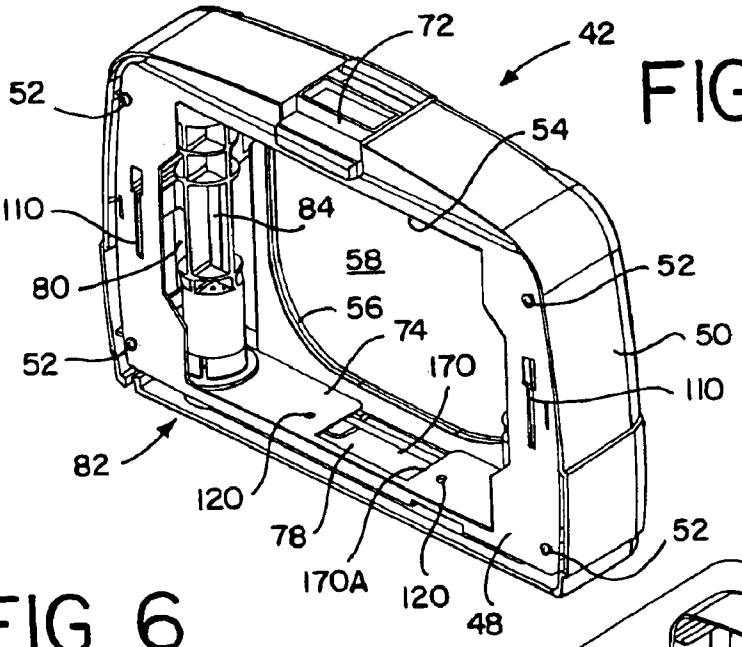


FIG. 4

FIG. 6

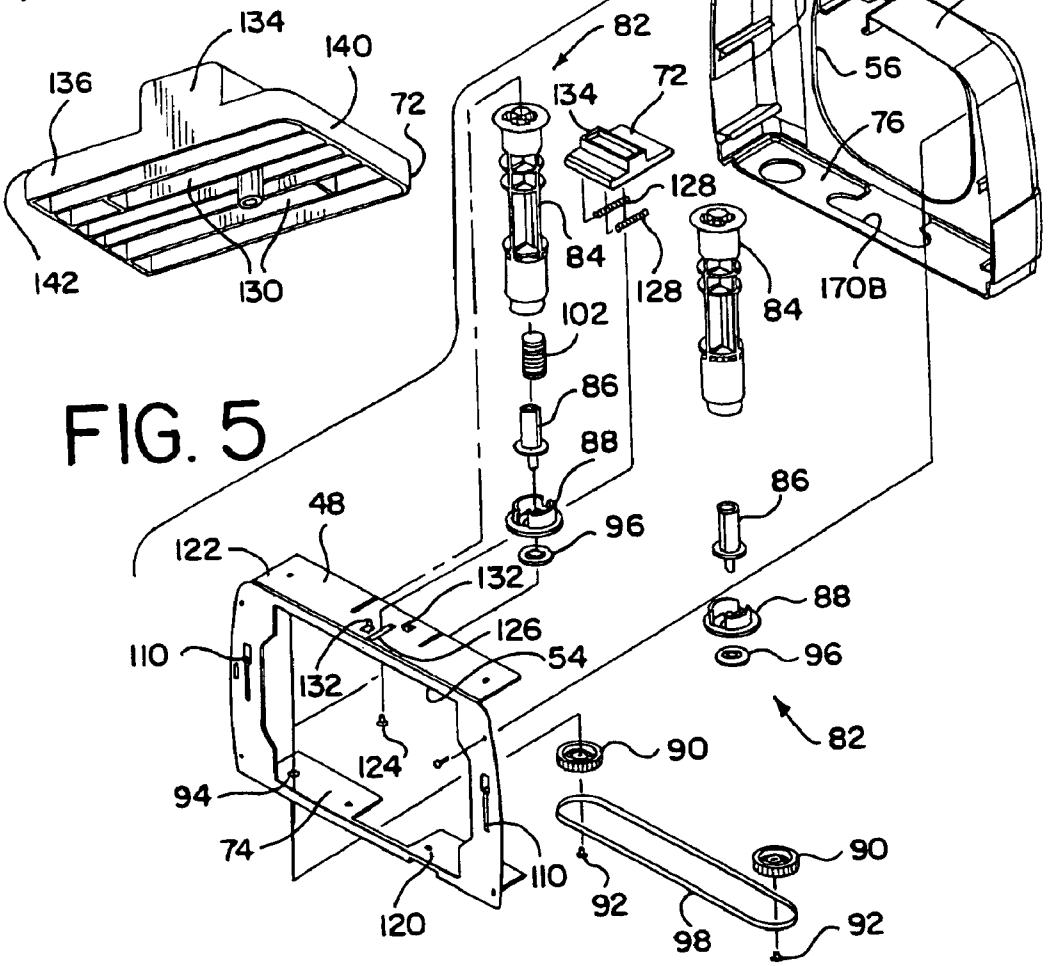


FIG. 5

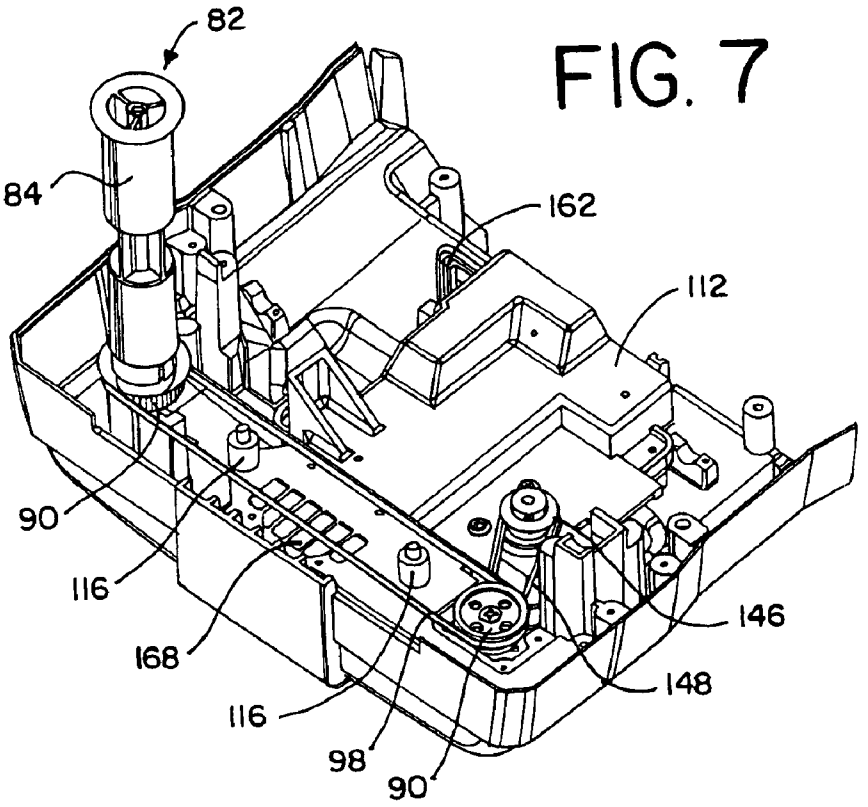

82
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FIG. 7

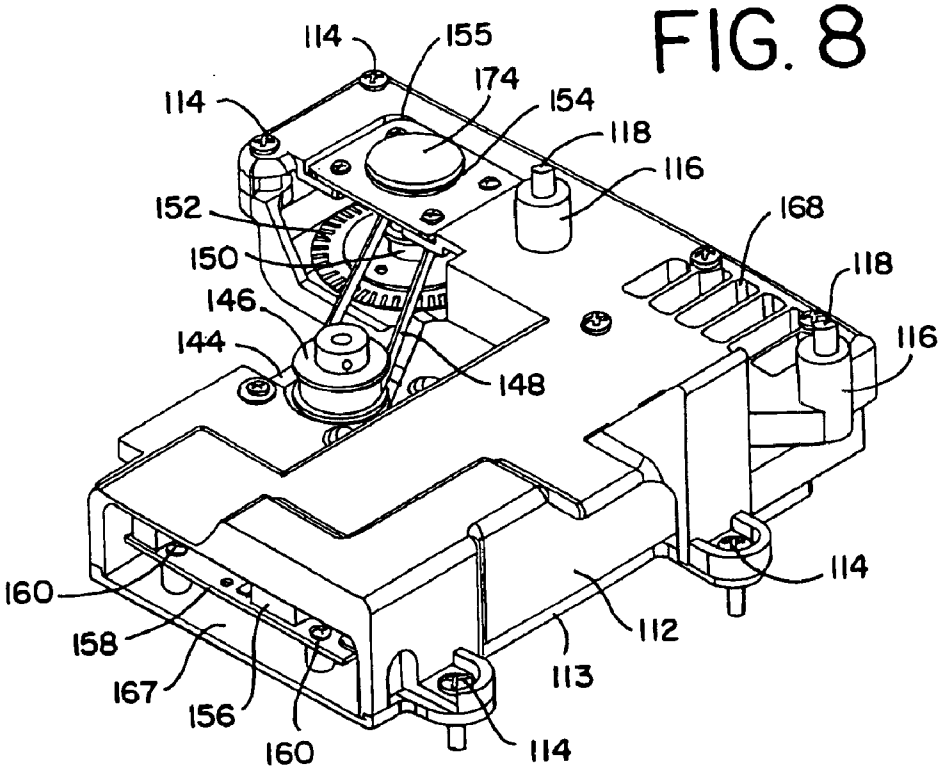
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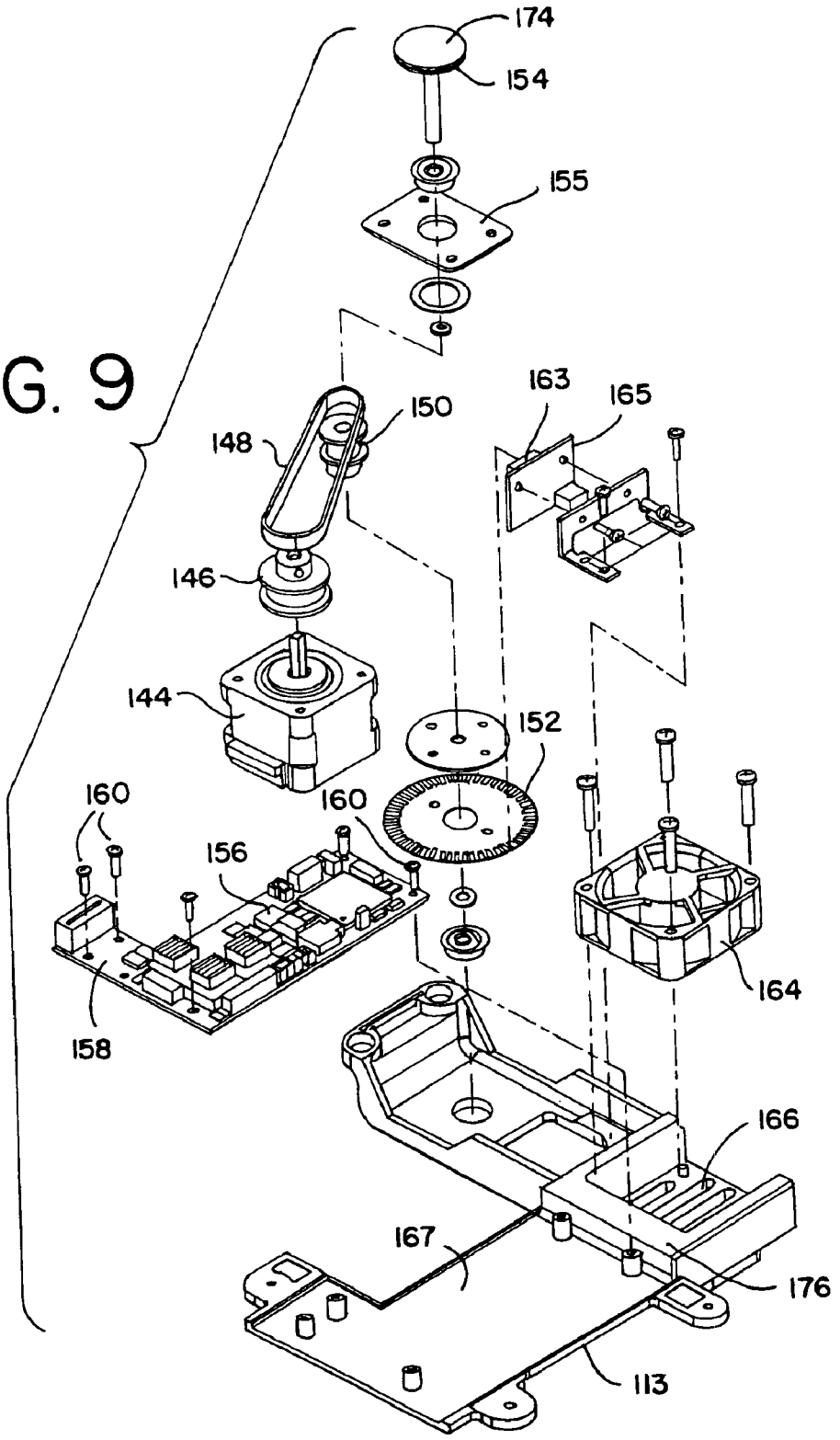
FIG. 8

FIG. 9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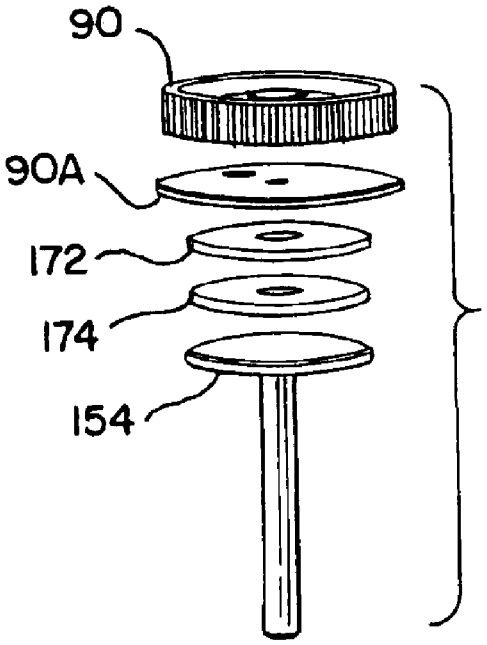
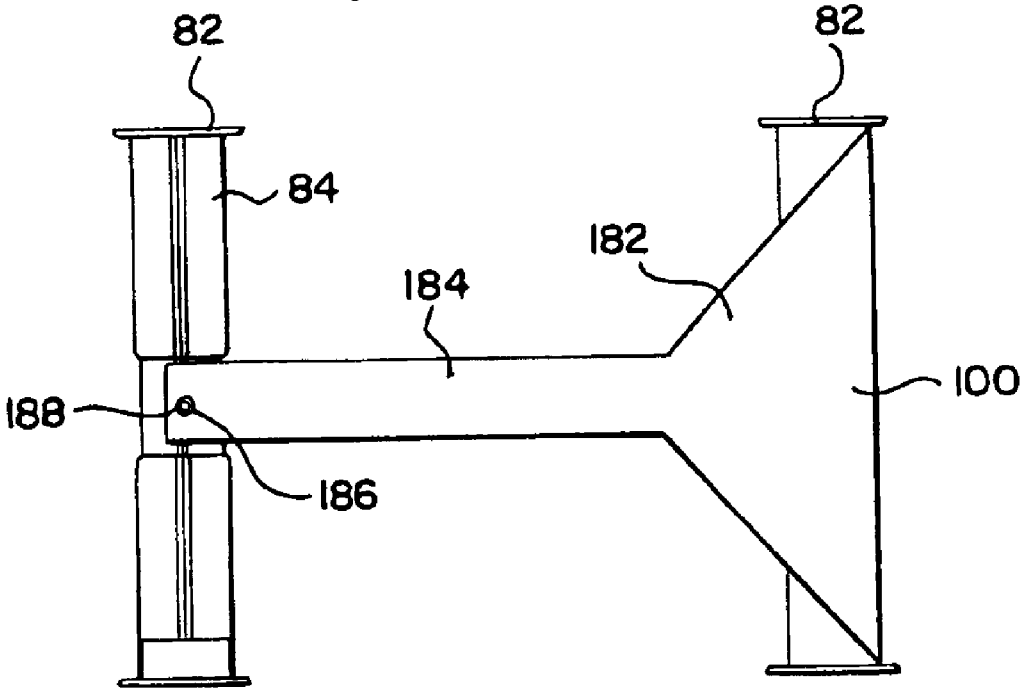


FIG. 10

FIG. 11



GEL SCROLLER ASSEMBLY FOR A LUMINAIRE

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to an improved gel scroller assembly for a luminaire.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

Luminaires, or lighting fixtures, including a housing containing a light source and an optical system are used for creating lighting effects for entertainment and architectural applications such as stages, studios, buildings, themed parks, churches, museums, restaurants and the like. A colored beam or wash of light is one frequently desired lighting effect. One widely used way to provide colored light is to use a gel, i.e., a translucent colored film, in the light path of a luminaire to add color to the emitted light.

In some luminaire systems, a single gel is simply mounted in the light path to provide a single color. For example, the gel can be supported in a frame that is mounted in a holder provided at the light exit opening located at the front of the luminaire. Although this is a simple and inexpensive way to achieve color, it is time consuming and inconvenient to change colors because the gel has to be removed and replaced with a new gel of a different color.

In order to automate the color changing process, motor driven gel changers have been provided. In one such approach, a gel scroller assembly is mounted to the front of the luminaire. The assembly includes a movable gel medium in the form of a gel scroll having a sequence of different colors wound around spaced drums or reels. The assembly is self contained, and includes a drive system with a motor for moving the gel medium to a selected position to achieve a desired color.

Self contained gel changers provide the capability of automated color changing, but are subject to disadvantages. Because the assembly includes the gel drive system with a motor and drive components, and perhaps also a cooling fan, it is expensive and cumbersome. Because of the cost of a self contained motor driven gel changer, the normal way to change gel media is to remove the original medium and install a new medium into the gel changer. In addition, power and control cabling must be provided for the gel changer. Known gel changers are attached to the luminaire with fasteners requiring tools and the use of both hands to attach or replace the gel changer.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A primary object of the present invention is to provide an improved gel scroller assembly for a luminaire. Other objects are to provide a gel scroller assembly including a scroller cassette that is inexpensive and light in weight; to provide a gel scroller assembly including a scroller cassette that can easily be mounted onto or detached from a luminaire with one hand and without tools; to provide a gel scroller cassette of low cost that permits the user to exchange the entire gel scroller cassette in order to change color arrays rather than to change the gel scroll in a single cassette; to provide a changer assembly for a light modifying medium that does not require the weight, expense or cabling requirements of a self contained changer unit; and to provide a gel scroller assembly overcoming disadvantages of gel scrollers used in the past.

In brief, in accordance with the invention there is provided a gel scroller assembly for a luminaire having a housing with a light beam exit opening. The scroller assembly includes a motor drive assembly mounted in the housing of the luminaire. The motor drive assembly includes a motor and a driver element driven by the motor and positioned adjacent to the exit opening. A scroller cassette includes a light passage. A latching system releasably attaches the scroller cassette in an operating position on the luminaire housing with the light passage aligned with the exit opening. The scroller cassette includes a gel scroll drive system for moving a gel scroll across the light passage. The drive system includes a driven member engaged by the driver element in the operating position of the scroller cassette.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

The present invention together with the above and other objects and advantages may best be understood from the following detailed description of the preferred embodiment of the invention illustrated in the drawings, wherein:

FIG. **1** is a front, side and top isometric view of a theatrical luminaire having a gel scroller assembly constructed in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. **2** is a side, front and top isometric view of the theatrical luminaire with the gel scroller cassette removed from the housing of the luminaire;

FIG. **3** is an isometric view of a top hat accessory that can be mounted in the accessory holder at the front of the scroller cassette;

FIG. **4** is an enlarged top, side and rear isometric view of the scroller cassette;

FIG. **5** is a top, side and rear exploded isometric view of components of the scroller cassette;

FIG. **6** is a greatly enlarged isometric bottom view of the scroller cassette latch member;

FIG. **7** is a fragmentary, top, side and front isometric view of components of the gel scroller assembly in the luminaire housing, with the top cover of the housing and the scroller cassette, except for one drum assembly and one drive pulley, removed;

FIG. **8** is an enlarged rear, top and side isometric view of the gel drive, fan and control board unit of the gel scroller assembly;

FIG. **9** is an exploded isometric view of the gel drive, fan and control board unit;

FIG. **10** is an enlarged exploded isometric view of components of the gel drive system; and

FIG. **11** is an elevational view of the gel drums and gel scroll of the scroller cassette.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Having reference now to the drawing, and initially to FIGS. **1** and **2**, there is illustrated a luminaire generally designated as **20** provided with a gel scroller assembly generally designated as **22** constructed in accordance with the principles of the present invention. Although the illustrated preferred embodiment of the invention incorporates the gel scroller assembly **22**, media other than gel may be used to modify light from the luminaire **20**, for example an array of gobos, translucent light diffusing material or a dichroic medium. At least some of the aspects of the invention are applicable to assemblies including light modifying media other than gel. In addition, at least some aspects of the invention may be applicable to gel changer assemblies other than gel scrollers.

The luminaire **20** is a theatrical luminaire, capable of creating theatrical or theatre-like lighting effects for a variety of entertainment and architectural applications. However, features of the invention are useful with other luminaires. The luminaire **20** has a housing **24** with a front portion **26** having a light exit opening **28**. The housing **24** is supported for pan and tilt movement by a yoke assembly **30** including a base **32** and support arms **34**. A light source such as a lamp is contained in a rear portion **36** of the housing **24**, and an optical system between the light source and the exit opening **28** provides an optically formed light beam. The housing **24** is moved to aim a beam of light emitted through the opening **28** at a target or an area, such as a part of a building or stage or the like.

The housing **24** includes a base member **38** that serves as an optical rail for supporting and positioning components of the luminaire **20** such as the light source and elements of the optical system. A cover **40** is attached to the base **36** and cooperates with the base **36** to form an enclosure for the internal components of the luminaire **20**.

In accordance with the present invention, the gel scroller assembly **22** includes a gel scroller cassette **42** that is releasably attached to the housing **24**. The gel scroller assembly **22** also includes a drive, fan and control board unit **44** that is mounted within the housing **24** near the light exit opening **28**. The drive, fan and control board unit **44** remains in place within the housing **24** when the gel scroller cassette **42** is removed from the housing **24** as shown in FIG. **2**. An interface coupling assembly **46** connects the drive, fan and control board unit **44** to the gel scroller cassette **42** when the cassette **42** is mounted upon the housing **24** as seen in FIG. **1** in order to provide mechanical power and cooling air flow to the cassette **42**.

The scroller cassette **42**, best seen in FIGS. **4** and **5**, includes a frame **48**, preferably a stamped and formed sheet metal part, and a cover **50**, preferable a molded plastic part. The frame **48** and cover **50** are held together by fasteners **52** (FIG. **4**). Aligned openings **54** and **56** in the frame **48** and cover **50** respectively define a light passage **58** that is aligned with the light exit opening **28** of the housing **24** when the cassette **42** is in place on the housing **24**. A beam of light emitted from the housing **24** passes through the light passage **58**.

When the scroller cassette **42** is installed on the luminaire housing **24**, a tab **60** of housing **24** is located slightly in front of the cover **50** of the cassette **42** (FIG. **1**). An opposed pair of flanges **62** at the upper front corners of the cover **50** are generally coplanar with the tab **60**, and cooperate with the tab **60** to define an accessory mounting nest **64**. An accessory, such as the top hat light shield **66** seen in FIG. **3**, can be mounted in the nest **64**. Shield **66** includes a circular cylindrical light guide **68** and a flat planar base **70**. The base **70** can be inserted down between the flanges **62** and behind the tab **60** where it is retained by a latch member **72** described below. Other accessories such as louvers or other types of light guides can be placed in the accessory mounting nest **64**. If the cassette **42** does not contain a gel, or if it is desired to add an additional gel, a individual gel frame can be placed in the nest **64**.

A base wall **74** of the cassette frame **48** is spaced above a bottom wall **76** of the cassette cover **50** to define a lower chamber **78**. A pair of side chambers **80** are formed between the frame **48** and the cover **50** at opposite sides of the light passage **58**. A drum assembly **82** is mounted in each side chamber **80**. Each drum assembly **82** includes a rotatably mounted drum **84**, an axle **86** and a lower end cap **88** above the base wall **74**. A drum drive pulley **90** is located below the wall **74** within the lower chamber **78** and is attached to the corresponding lower end cap **88** by a fastener **92** (FIG. **5**) extending through an opening **94** in the wall **74**. A bearing **96** reduces friction between the wall **74** and the end cap **88**.

A drive belt **98** located within the lower chamber **78** engages both drive pulleys **90** for simultaneous rotation of the spaced drum assemblies **82**. A scroll **100** or elongated web of gel material (shown only in FIG. **11**) is wound onto the drums **84** of the assemblies **82** and is wound back and forth between the drums as the drums are rotated. The scroll **100** typically includes an array of segments of different colors and a selected color can be placed across the light passage **58** by controlled rotation of the drum assemblies **82**. A gel tension torsion spring **102** mounted within one of the drum assemblies **82** (FIG. **5**) accommodates the variations in the effective diameters of the drums resulting from winding the scroll **100** on the drums **84**.

A latching system generally designated as **104** releasably attaches the gel scroller cassette **42** to the front portion **26** of the luminaire housing **24** over the light exit opening **28**. The light exit opening **28** is defined in a front plate **106**, and the latching system **104** includes a pair of catches **108** at the outer edges of the plate **106** at opposite sides of the opening **28** (FIG. **2**). Frame **48** of the cassette **42** includes a pair of slots **110** that mate with the catches **108** (FIGS. **4** and **5**).

The drive, fan and control board unit **44** includes a housing **112** and a base **113** attached by fasteners **114** (FIG. **8**) to the luminaire housing base member **38** at the front portion **26** of the housing **24**. A pair of positioning pedestals **116** are carried by the frame **112**. When the catches **108** are received into the slots **110** and the cassette **42** is lowered in place, pins **118** on the pedestals **116** are received into holes **120** in the base wall **74** of the frame **48**. The cassette **42** is accurately positioned in the side-to-side (X) and the forward-and-back (Y) planes by engagement of the catches **108** in the slots **110** and by engagement of the pins **118** in the holes **120**. The base wall **74** rests on the upper surfaces of the pedestals **116** to accurately position the cassette **74** in the up-and-down (Z) plane.

The latch **72** releasably retains the scroller cassette **42** in the installed position of FIG. **1**. The latch **72** is slideably retained on a top wall **122** of the cassette frame **48** by a fastener **124** extending through a slot **126** in wall **122**. The latch **72** is normally held in a centered position by a pair of springs **128** seated in spring cavities **130** in the underside of the latch **72** (FIG. **6**). The springs **128** bear against tabs **132** (FIG. **5**) extending up from the wall **122**. A button **134** on the top of the latch **72** is used to slide the latch forward or rearward against a return force provided by one of the springs **128**. A rear latch nose **136** normally engages a mating latch opening **138** in the front plate **106** to retain the scroller cassette **42** in the installed position. The latch **72** also includes a forward latch nose **140** that normally extends forward to retain an accessory in the accessory mounting nest **64**.

Loading or removing the scroller cassette **42** is a quick and easy one-hand operation. The user holds the cassette in the hand and places it at the front portion **28** of the luminaire housing **24** so that the catches **108** enter the slots **110**. The cassette is moved down so that the pins **118** are received into the holes **120**. A chamfer **142** on the rear latch nose **136** causes the latch **72** to slide forward from its normal centered position as the nose **136** engages the front plate **106** or the housing cover **40**. As the cassette **42** reaches its installed position. the rear latch nose **136** is aligned with the latch

opening **138** and the latch is returned forward by one of the springs **128**. The nose **136** enters the opening **130** the retain the cassette in place.

To remove the cassette, the user moves the button **134** forward to withdraw the rear latch nose **136** from the latch opening **138**. Then the cassette **42** is simply lifted from the luminaire housing **24** and moved forward, as pins **118** withdraw from holes **120** and slots **110** move free of catches **108**. To install or remove an accessory such as the light shield **66** from the accessory nest **64**, the user slides the button **134** rearward so that the forward latch nose **140** moves clear of the region between the flanges **62**. An accessory can then be moved vertically into or out of the nest **64**.

When the cassette **42** is installed on the luminaire housing **24**, the drive, fan and control board unit **44** is interconnected with the scroller cassette **42** by the interface coupling assembly **46**. The drive, fan and control board unit **44** includes a drive motor **144** that rotates a drive gear **146** (FIGS. **8** and **9**). A drive belt **148** engages the drive gear **146** and a driven hub gear **150**. A toothed position wheel **152** and a cassette drive hub **154** at opposite sides of a support plate **155** are connected for simultaneous rotation with the driven hub gear **150**.

A control circuit **156** for components including at least the drive motor **144** is mounted at least in part on a control circuit board **158** attached by fasteners **160** to the base **113** (FIG. **7**). A cable harness **162** (FIG. **7**) is connected to the control circuit board **158** of the drive, fan and control board unit **44** Position feedback information is provided by a position sensor **163** that senses the position wheel **152** and is mounted on a gel position circuit board **165**. As seen in FIG. **8**, the control circuit board **158** is mounted in a cooing air flow channel **167** defined between the housing **112** and the base **113**.

A cooling fan **164** is mounted to the base **113**. The fan **164** includes a flow port array **166**, preferably an outlet flow port, directed down into the luminaire housing **24**. A second port array, preferably an inlet flow port, is defined in a louvered flow grate **168** opening at the upper surface of the housing **112**.

The flow port **168**, the cassette drive hub **154** and one of the drum drive pulleys **90**, together with a cooling air flow opening **170** in the cassette base wall **74** are components of the interface coupling assembly **46**. The opening **170** includes an opening **170**A in the base wall of the cassette frame **48** and an opening **170**B in the in the **4** bottom wall of the cassette cover **50** (FIG. **5**).

The flow port **168** and the cassette drive hub **154** are located upon the housing **112** in positions to register with the gel scroller cassette **42** when the cassette is installed. In the installed position, the cassette drive hub **154** is coupled in a drive relationship to one of the drum drive pulleys **90**. In the preferred embodiment, a pair of hook and loop fastener pads **172** and **174** provide a releasable drive connection between the cassette drive hub **154** and the drum drive pulley **90**.

As can be seen in FIG. **10**, a pulley shoulder plate **90**A defines a flat bottom pulley surface at the underside of the pulley **90**. An annular hook fastener pad **172** is adhered to the plate **90**A. A mating annular loop fastener pad **174** is adhered to the top surface of the cassette drive hub **154**. For example, the mating pads **173** and **176** may be self adhesive pads of VELCO (registered trademark of Velcro Industries) brand hook and loop material. When the cassette **42** is installed, the pad **172** engages the pad **174**, establishing a mechanical drive connection between the drive, fan and control board unit **44** and the gel scroller cassette **42** to rotate the gel drum assemblies **82** in response to rotation of the gel; drive motor **144**. The hook and loop fastener pads **172** and **176** provide a reliable, releasable connection with a long service life. There is no need to locate the pulley **90** and the drive hub **154** in any particular angular relationship in order to make the connection. There is no free play in the connection and it operates quietly.

A cooling air path is provided by the interface coupling assembly **46** between the interior of the gel scroller cassette and the interior of the luminaire housing **24**. In the installed position of the scroller cassette **42**, the cooling air flow opening **170** of the cassette **42** is aligned with the flow port **168** of the drive, fan and control board unit **44**. Part of the cooling air flowing through the fan **164** travels downward through the outlet flow port **166** and directly into the luminaire housing **24**. Another portion of the cooling air flow travels radially outwardly over a wall **176** (FIG. **9**) an through the cooling air flow channel **167** to cool components of the control circuit **156** mounted on the circuit board **158**.

The gel scroll **100** is a continuous elongated web of gel material having one or more varying characteristics, such as color or translucency, along its length. To change the effect of the scroll upon a light beam in the light passage **58** of the cassette **42**, the drums **84** are rotated to transfer the scroll **100** in selected alternate directions from drum to drum. As seen in FIG. **11**, the cassette **42** includes a simple and self aligning scroll mounting system generally designated as **178**. Each of the two ends **180** of the scroll **100** has a tapered section **182** terminating in an elongated narrow end segment **184** having a securing hole **186** at its end. The hole **186** engages a recessed attachment post **188** of the corresponding drum **84**. This provides a mechanical connection permitting the scroll **100** to be wound upon the drum **84**. The scroll end can pivot about the post **188** and moves into the properly aligned position as the scroll is wound upon the drum. There is no need for adhesive tape or other separate fastening devices. the narrow portion **184** can be positioned in the light path to minimize the presence of the gel in the light beam.

When the gel scroller cassette is installed as seen in FIG. **1**, as a result of the interface coupling assembly **46**, the drive motor **144** can be operated by the control circuit **156** to move the gel scroll **100** between the drums **84**. Rotation of the drive motor **144** rotates the drive gear **146** so that the drive belt **148** rotates the driven hub gear **150** and the cassette drive hub **154** together with the position wheel **152**. The cassette drive hub **154** is mechanically engaged with the corresponding drum drive pulley **90**, and the drive belt **98** engaging both pulleys **90** causes both drums **84** to rotate in a selected direction in order to position a desired segment of the gel scroll **100** in the light passage **58**.

A cooling air flow path is also established by the interface coupling assembly **46** when the cassette **42** is installed. The cooling air flow opening **170** of the cassette **42** registers with the flow port **168**. When the cooling fan **164** operates, air flows along a path including the interior of the cassette **42** behind the plane of the gel scroll **100**, through the opening **170** and into the flow port **168** of the fan **164**. The service life of the gel scroll is extended by the reduced heat resulting from the cooling air flow. In the preferred arrangement, cooling air is drawn into the cassette **42** from the exterior of the luminaire housing **24** and flows through the interior of the cassette, cooling the gel scroll **100**, and into the interior of the housing **24** where it provides cooling of other components including the control circuit **156** located in the channel **167**.

Because the drive, fan and control board unit **44** including the drive motor **144**, circuit board **158** and cooling fan **164** are mounted in the luminaire housing **24** and not within the gel scroller cassette **42**, the cassette **42** is relative light in weight and low in cost. An advantage of this arrangement is that the cassette can be installed and removed easily and quickly. Due to its low cost, it is practical to have a number of scroller cassettes **42** at hand for a luminaire **20** and, for example, to change color scrolls by replacing one cassette **42** with another rather than by changing the scroll in a single cassette **42**. Because neither the drive motor **144** nor the fan **164** is in the scroller cassette **42**, they can receive power and control signals provided within the luminaire **20** and it is not necessary to extend electrical connections or to connect electrical cables or conductors to the cassette **42**.

While the present invention has been described with reference to the details of the embodiments of the invention shown in the drawing, these details are not intended to limit the scope of the invention as claimed in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A gel scroller assembly for a luminaire having a housing with a light beam exit opening, said scroller assembly comprising:

a motor drive assembly mounted in the housing;

said motor drive assembly including a motor and a driver element driven by said motor and positioned adjacent to the exit opening;

a scroller cassette including a light passage;

a latching system releasably attaching said scroller cassette in an operating position on said housing with said light passage aligned with the exit opening;

said scroller cassette including a gel scroll drive system for moving a gel scroll across said light passage; and

said drive system including a driven member engaged by said driver element in said operating position of said scroller cassette.

2. The gel scroller assembly of claim **1** further comprising a fan mounted in said housing, a fan air opening in said housing communicating with said fan, and said scroller cassette including a port aligned with said air opening in said operating position of said scroller cassette for the movement of air through said air opening and said port.

3. The gel scroller assembly of claim **1**, said latching system including a manually moveable latch member.

4. The gel scroller assembly of claim **1**, said drive system including a pair of drums and a drive component coupled to said driven member for rotating said drums simultaneously, said driver element comprising a rotatable driver element, and said driven member including a rotatable member coupled to said rotatable driver element.

5. The gel scroller assembly of claim **4** further comprising a fan mounted in said housing, a fan air opening in said housing communicating with said fan, and said scroller cassette including a port aligned with said air opening in said operating position of said scroller cassette for the movement of air through said air opening and said port.

6. The gel scroller assembly of claim **5**, said cassette being removable from the luminaire housing upon release of said latching system, said driver element separating from said driven member and said fan air opening separating from said port upon removal of said cassette from the luminaire housing.

7. The gel scroller assembly of claim **4**, at least one of said drums having a recessed post, and a gel scroll having an end segment with an aperture receiving said recessed post.

8. The gel scroller assembly of claim **4**, further comprising a pair of releasable hook and loop fastener elements connected between said driver element and said driven member.

9. A mechanically driven gel scroller cassette comprising:

a cassette housing defining a light beam path through said cassette housing;

a pair of gel scroll drums at opposite sides of said light beam path;

a gel scroll wound upon said drums and intersecting said light beam path;

a drive mechanism in said cassette housing spaced from said gel scroll interconnecting said drums for simultaneous rotation; and

a mechanically driven element in said cassette housing coupled to said drive mechanism, said driven element having only a single drive connection accessible from the exterior of said cassette housing.

10. The gel scroller cassette of claim **9**, at least one of said drums having a recessed post, and said gel scroll having an end segment with an aperture receiving said recessed post.

11. A mechanically driven gel scroller cassette comprising:

a cassette housing defining a light beam path through said cassette housing;

a pair of gel scroll drums at opposite sides of said light beam path;

a gel scroll wound upon said drums and intersecting said light beam path;

a drive mechanism interconnecting said drums for simultaneous rotation; and

a mechanically driven element coupled to said drive mechanism, said driven element having a drive connection accessible from the exterior of the cassette housing;

said drive connection comprising part of a hook and loop fastener pair.

12. A light modifying medium changer assembly for a luminaire having a housing including a light beam exit opening, said changer assembly comprising:

a motor drive assembly mounted in the housing;

said motor drive assembly including a motor and a driver element driven by said motor and positioned adjacent to the exit opening;

a cassette having a light passage;

a latching system releasably attaching said cassette in an operating position on said housing with said light passage aligned with the exit opening;

said cassette including a light modifying medium and a drive system for moving said light modifying medium relative to said light passage; and

said drive system including a driven member engaged by said driver element in said operating position of said cassette.

13. A medium changer assembly as claimed in claim **12**, said medium comprising a scroll, and said drive system including a pair of drums.

14. A medium changer assembly as claimed in claim **13**, said scroll comprising a gel scroll.

15. A medium changer assembly as claimed in claim **12**, further comprising a fan mounted in said housing, a fan air opening in said housing communicating with said fan, and said cassette including a port aligned with said air opening in said operating position of said cassette for the movement of air through said air opening and said port.

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