

NON-PNEUMATIC TIRE

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the invention

5 This invention relates to the field of so called non
pneumatic tires. More particularly, this invention relates
to a class of wheels involving an outer and inner rings and
a space between them where some flexing structures are
provided. The said flexing structures being in form of web
like objects able to flex under the load and providing an
10 equivalent of the pneumatic tire behaviour.

This class of wheels including the "non-pneumatic"
term was started by pioneers like Long at Goodyear in late
seventies and Palinkas, Hybokken, Ims, Pajtas at Uniroyal
in late eighties and is believed to play a significant role
15 in the future of wheel technology. All these pioneers
dedicated their life to the rubber and polyurethane wheel
applications and Horst Ims worked at Pennemunde as a
mechanical engineer later specialising in polymer
technology.

20 2. Prior Art

The prior art is described in the Long & Rye Palinkas,
Hybokken, Pajtas patents and essentially is based on a
central web in form of a ring/disk placed symmetrically in
the space between the outer and inner annular rings of the
25 wheel. Essentially this disk is the main load carrying
object of the wheel.

The concept of two annular rings with a space between
them making the basic structure of the wheel was probably
first time presented by Long and Rye in US patent 4226273.
30 The space between the said rings was occupied by some
flexing structures anticipating the later work of Palinkas
and all.

Coming back to the closest prior art (Palinkas and
all) this load carrying ring/disk is reinforced or
35 supported laterally on each side by inclined webs so that

when the load is applied they can flex and by this simulating the effect of a pneumatic tire.

When rolling the structure formed of the central web and the lateral webs are flexing under load. The central web has a buckling type of flexing and the lateral webs they simply bend.

The tests proved in time that the stress spectra generated in the central and lateral web structure has peaks in the area connecting the central disk with the inner surface of the outer annular ring (the rim) of the wheel.

The cyclic nature of the stress combined with the magnitude of it generated a combined effect of either heat or fatigue or combination of these depending of the load and the time the wheel was used.

Even at normal loads -in the case of spare tire applications- after a certain number of cycles the area where the central disk is united with the rim overheated reaching temperatures in excess of 120 to 150 degrees Celsius and simply the material melted and affected the area between the rolling rim and the web structure ending in failure of the wheel. A combination of hysteresis and low heat dissipation capability inherent to polymers created the failure conditions. In the case of polyurethane this was even more dangerous because the polyurethane melts when it reaches a certain temperature.

This initial class of non pneumatic tires had a lot of hope to use the flexing effect and to eliminate the hysteresis melting typical for the solid tires. In that case the only wear expected from the tire was supposed to be the outer lining involved directly in the rolling contact-which was a wear based on abrasion mainly, Velcro effect and flakes generated by Hertz/Palmgren effect. However this was not happened, the stumbling block being the generation of the hot areas which produced the failure of the wheel.

The heating effect was also generated by the fact that, the outer rim was softer than the web flexing/supporting structure so the deformation and the shearing and compression stress structure was different for the two material resulting in stressing the bonding area and also the structural connection between the central disk/web and the annular outer element.

It is an object of this invention to provide a flexing supporting structure between the inner and outer rings of the non pneumatic tire to reduce the stress and heat generated by hysteresis so that the wheel to be used safely in high speed and safety applications-the only wear expected being the one associated strictly with the outside surface of the wheel.

It is yet a further object of this invention to provide a wheel with increased load capacity.

It is a still further object of this invention to provide a wheel easier to manufacture than those in the prior art.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The foregoing and other objects are achieved by this invention by the fact that is involving/comprising the following:

- an exterior torus having an inside diameter and an exterior diameter and having a thickness and having a width and having an inside and an outside surface;

- an interior torus having an inside diameter and an exterior diameter and having a thickness and having a width and having an inside and an outside surface;

- the interior and the exterior toruses being placed in such a way that they share the same centre of gravity and the same axis of rotation/symmetry;

- the interior torus having the outside diameter smaller than the exterior diameter of the exterior torus;

- in the space between the exterior Torus and the interior torus being a waving, undulating waveform structure comprising the following and defined as follows:

5 -on the outer surface of the inner torus being a median circle resulted from the intersection of a plane perpendicular on the axis of rotation of the inner torus, with the outer surface of the inner torus, and passing through the centre of gravity of the inner torus;

 -in relation with the medial circle and contained on the outer surface of the inner torus a waveform curve having amplitude and wavelength is generated as follows:

10 -the wavelength is defined along the circumference of the median circle and the amplitude variation being defined perpendicularly on the median circle plane and the said waveform curve has a constant wavelength and the number of wavelengths contained in the median circle is an integer;

15 -the areas contained between the waveform curve and the median circle associated with the half of the wavelength being constant and symmetric/ equal with each other and being identic in terms of profile and form as well as the areas associated with the quarters of wavelength being also constant and symmetric/equal with each other and being identic in terms of profile and form;

20 -therefore on the outer surface of the inner torus we have along the median circle as a circular axis a symmetric/regular oscillating curve with constant wavelength and amplitude, the number of wavelengths contained in the median circle being an integer;

25 -a generating profile defined as follows:

30 -a plane perpendicular on the waveform curve, therefore intersecting the waveform curve in only one point, the perpendicular plane intersecting the inner surface of the outside torus and the outer surface of the inner torus;

35 -whereby from the intersecting resulting intersection curves on the inner surface of the exterior torus and the outer surface of the interior torus, these intersection curves, depending of the position of the perpendicular plane could be either straight lines or slightly curved lines;

-on each line of intersection between the perpendicular plane and the inner surface of the outer torus and the outer surface of the inner torus are selected 2 points,

5 -the points from the inner surface of the outer torus are united with the points from the outer surface of the inner torus, by uniting curves contained in the perpendicular plane in such a way that these uniting curves are not intersecting each other and they are contained in
10 the space between the toruses, in such a way that the four points, the uniting curves and the intersecting lines are defining a closed plane surface or profile having at the top and bottom the intersecting lines of the perpendicular plane with the inner surface of the exterior torus and with
15 the outer surface of the interior torus and on the sides the said uniting curves contained in the perpendicular plane;

20 -the closed plane surface/profile defined as above being hereinafter named the generating closed surface/contouring/profile;

25 -it is important to remember that the generating closed surface/contouring/profile is contained in the perpendicular plane therefore is all the time perpendicular on the wave form curve, the upper and lower lines varying depending on the intersection with the toruses surfaces;

30 -the generating process is started from a starting point which can be any point on the wave form curve but for the ease of understanding it is supposed to start from a point where the wave form curve is intersecting the median circle;

35 -the surface/solid generating process is done by moving the generating closed surface/contouring/profile along the wave form curve respecting the above conditions, the uniting curves describing/contouring the surface structure of the said wave form undulating structure between the toruses;

-whereby the toruses, the waveform undulating structure being unitized/rigidized together by casting or any other known approach, forming a toroidal elastic structure having an inner diameter, which is the inner diameter of the interior torus and an outside diameter which is the outside diameter of the exterior torus;

-whereby the toroidal elastic structure having on the outside applied a rim for rolling and at the inside a hub by this the assembly made of the toroidal elastic structure and the rim and hub becoming a wheel;

-in a simpler case, the wave form curve on the outer surface of the inner torus being defined as follows:

-a curve in form of a semicircle called semicircle module having a beginning and an end these being diametrically opposed;

-the inner torus being cut with a plane containing its axis of symmetry; the inner torus then is unfolded and on the unfolded outer surface and in reference with the median circle above defined and also unfolded, a wave form curve is traced characterized by the fact that is formed of a succession of semicircle modules all having the same radius;

-therefore if the wave form curve is starting from a point on the median circle, there we have placed the first semicircle module with the beginning in the starting point and the end diametrically opposed but on the median circle unfolded, and after this another semicircle module but rotated accordingly to permit a continuation of the waveform curve; so the wave form curve is a continuous unicursal succession of semicircle modules;

-then the unfolded torus with the waveform curve as described above is brought back to toroidal form, in this way having the wave form curve defined on the outer surface of the inner torus;

-a contouring profile is defined as above except the fact that the uniting curves are straight lines intersecting with the axis of symmetry/rotation of the

toruses therefore all the time perpendicular on the outer surface of the inner torus and on the inner surface of the exterior torus;

-whereby the straight lines as defined above are equally distanced from the wave form curve on the inner surface of the inner torus;

-whereby at the areas of intersection of the waveform structure and the inner/outer surfaces of the toruses there are provided appropriate fillets to reduce the concentration stresses;

-whereby the wave like structure has a width which is twice the amplitude of the wave which is less than the width of the toruses;

The above described non pneumatic tire has the advantage of using the buckling capacity of curved or circular cylindrical structures as opposed the vertical web like as in the prior art. This is increasing the wheel capacity and reduces the stresses and eliminates the heat generation in the dangerous areas. The tests made by the author proved an improved performance on terms of load/speed and fatigue substantially higher than the prior art solutions. The tests made by the author suggests that this new class of non pneumatic tires could have substantial application in areas where safety and long term operation is important.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

These and other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be better understood by reading the following detailed description in conjunction with the attached drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a representation of the exterior/interior torus structure;

FIG. 2 Is a representation of the torus together with the wave form undulating structure according with the invention;

FIG. 3 is representing the concept of the median circle;

FIG. 4 is representing the waveform curve on the outer surface of the inner torus;

FIG. 5 is representing the generating/contouring profile;

5 FIG. 6 is representing the process of generating the surface of the wave form structure;

FIG. 7 is representing the non pneumatic wheel assembly according with the invention;

10 FIG. 8 is representing the defining a simpler profile based on semicircular modules;

FIG. 9 is representing the generating process of the simpler variant;

FIG. 10 is a 3D illustration of a wave form undulating structure/ribbon.

15 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Below is given a illustration of the invention in relation with the Figures 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 and 10, describing a non pneumatic tire involving/comprising the following:

20 -an exterior torus 1 having an inside diameter 2 and an exterior diameter 3 and having a thickness 4 and having a width 5 and having an inside 6 and an outside surface 7;

25 -an interior torus 8 having an inside diameter 9 and an exterior diameter 10 and having a thickness 11 and having a width 12 and having an inside 13 and an outside surface 14;

-the interior and the exterior toruses being placed in such a way that they share the same centre of gravity 15 and the same axis of rotation/symmetry 16;

30 -the interior torus having the outside diameter smaller than the exterior diameter of the exterior torus;

-in the space 17 between the exterior torus and the interior torus being a waving, undulating waveform structure 18 comprising the following and defined as follows:

35 -on the outer surface of the inner torus being a median circle 19 resulted from the intersection of a plane

20 perpendicular on the axis of rotation of the inner torus
16, with the outer surface of the inner torus, and passing
through the centre of gravity 21 of the inner torus;

-in relation with the median circle and contained on
5 the outer surface 14 of the inner torus 8 a waveform curve
22 having amplitude and wavelength is generated as follows:

-the wavelength 23 is defined along the circumference
of the median circle 19 and the amplitude variation 24
10 being defined perpendicularly on the median circle plane
and the said waveform curve has a constant wavelength and
the number of wavelengths contained in the median circle is
an integer;

-the areas 25 contained between the waveform curve and
the median circle associated with the half of the
15 wavelength 26 being constant and symmetric/ equal with each
other and being identical in terms of profile and form as
well as the areas 27 associated with the quarters of
wavelength 28 being also constant and symmetrical/equal
with each other and being identic in terms of profile and
20 form;

-therefore on the outer surface of the inner torus we
have along the median circle as a circular axis a
symmetrical/regular oscillating curve with constant
wavelength and amplitude, the number of wavelengths
25 contained in the median circle being an integer;

-a generating profile defined as follows:

-a plane 29 perpendicular on the waveform curve,
therefore intersecting the waveform curve in only one point
30, the perpendicular plane intersecting the inner surface
of the outside torus and the outer surface 14 of the inner
torus;

-whereby from the intersecting resulting intersection
curves 31 on the inner surface 17 of the exterior torus and
the outer surface 14 of the interior torus, these
35 intersection curves, depending of the position of the
perpendicular plane could be either straight lines or
slightly curved lines;

-on each line of intersection between the perpendicular plane and the inner surface of the outer torus and the outer surface of the inner torus are selected 2 points 32;

5 -the points 33 from the inner surface of the outer torus are united with the points 34 from the outer surface of the inner torus, by uniting curves 34a contained in the perpendicular plane in such a way that these uniting curves are not intersecting each other and they are contained in
10 the space between the toruses, in such a way that the four points, the uniting curves and the intersecting lines are defining a closed plane surface 35 or profile "abcd" having at the top and bottom the intersecting lines of the perpendicular plane with the inner surface of the exterior
15 torus and with the outer surface of the interior torus and on the sides the said uniting curves contained in the perpendicular plane;

20 -the closed plane surface/profile defined as above being hereinafter named the generating closed surface/contouring/profile;

25 -it is important to remember that the generating closed surface/contouring/profile is contained in the perpendicular plane 29 therefore is all the time perpendicular on the wave form curve, the upper and lower lines varying depending on the intersection with the toruses surfaces;

30 -the generating process is started from a starting point which can be any point on the wave form curve but for the ease of understanding it is supposed to start from a point 36 where the wave form curve is intersecting the median circle;

35 -the surface/solid generating process is done by moving the generating closed surface/contouring/profile 35 along the wave form curve respecting the above conditions, the uniting curves describing/contouring the surface structure of the said wave form undulating structure between the toruses;

-whereby the toruses, the waveform undulating structure being unitized/rigidized together by casting or any other known approach, forming a toroidal elastic structure 37 having an inner diameter 38, which is the inner diameter of the interior torus and an outside diameter 39 which is the outside diameter of the exterior torus;

-whereby the toroidal elastic structure having on the outside applied a rim 39 for rolling and at the inside a hub 40 by this the assembly made of the toroidal elastic structure and the rim and hub becoming a wheel;

-in a simpler case, the wave form curve on the outer surface of the inner torus being defined as follows:

-a curve 41 in form of a semicircle 42 called semicircle module having a beginning 43 and an end 44 these being diametrically opposed;

-the inner torus being cut with a plane 45 containing its axis of symmetry 16; the inner torus then is unfolded 46 and on the unfolded outer surface 47 and in reference with the median circle 19 above defined and also unfolded, a wave form curve is traced characterized by the fact that is formed of a succession of semicircle modules 42 all having the same radius;

-therefore if the wave form curve is starting from a point 48 on the median circle, there we have placed the first semicircle module 49 with the beginning in the starting point and the end diametrically opposed but on the median circle unfolded, and after this another semicircle module 50 but rotated accordingly to permit a continuation of the waveform curve; so the wave form curve is a continuous unicursal succession of semicircle modules;

-then the unfolded torus with the waveform curve as described above is brought back to toroidal form 51, in this way having the wave form curve defined on the outer surface 14 of the inner torus 8;

-a contouring profile is defined as above except the fact that the uniting curves are straight lines 53

intersecting with the axis of symmetry/rotation of the toruses therefore all the time perpendicular on the outer surface of the inner torus and on the inner surface of the exterior torus;

5 -whereby the straight lines as defined above are equally distanced 54 from the wave form curve on the inner surface of the inner torus;

10 -whereby at the areas of intersection of the waveform structure and the inner/outer surfaces of the toruses there are provided appropriate fillets to reduce the concentration stresses;

 -whereby the wave like structure has a width which is twice the amplitude of the wave which is less than the width of the toruses;

15 The main advantage of the application of this invention is the fact that the proposed class of non pneumatic tire is using the full advantage of the curved or circular bodies to sustain bigger buckling forces than the web like bodies of the same volume.

CLAIMS

THE EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION IN WHICH AN EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OR/AND PRIVILEGE UNDER THE LAWS IS CLAIMED ARE DEFINED AS FOLLOWS:

1. A class of non pneumatic tires characterized by the fact that involves/comprises the following:

-an exterior torus having an inside diameter and an exterior diameter and having a thickness and having a width and having an inside and an outside surface;

-an interior torus having an inside diameter and an exterior diameter and having a thickness and having a width and having an inside and an outside surface;

-the interior and the exterior toruses being placed in such a way that they share the same centre of gravity and the same axis of rotation/symmetry;

-the interior torus having the outside diameter smaller than the exterior diameter of the exterior torus;

-in the space between the exterior Torus and the interior torus being a waving, undulating waveform structure comprising the following and defined as follows:

-on the outer surface of the inner torus being a median circle resulted from the intersection of a plane perpendicular on the axis of rotation of the inner torus, with the outer surface of the inner torus, and passing through the centre of gravity of the inner torus;

-in relation with the medial circle and contained on the outer surface of the inner torus a waveform curve having amplitude and wavelength is generated as follows:

-the wavelength is defined along the circumference of the median circle and the amplitude variation being defined perpendicularly on the median circle plane and the said waveform curve has a constant wavelength and the number of wavelengths contained in the median circle is an integer;

-the areas contained between the waveform curve and the median circle associated with the half of the wavelength being constant and symmetric/ equal with each other and being identic in terms of profile and form as

35 well as the areas associated with the quarters of
wavelength being also constant and symmetric/equal with
each other and being identic in terms of profile and form;

-therefore on the outer surface of the inner torus we
have along the median circle as a circular axis a
symmetric/regular oscillating curve with constant
40 wavelength and amplitude, the number of wavelengths
contained in the median circle being an integer;

-a generating profile defined as follows:

-a plane perpendicular on the waveform curve,
therefore intersecting the waveform curve in only one
45 point, the perpendicular plane intersecting the inner
surface of the outside torus and the outer surface of the
inner torus;

-whereby from the intersecting resulting intersection
curves on the inner surface of the exterior torus and the
50 outer surface of the interior torus, these intersection
curves, depending of the position of the perpendicular
plane could be either straight lines or slightly curved
lines;

-on each line of intersection between the
perpendicular plane and the inner surface of the outer
55 torus and the outer surface of the inner torus are selected
2 points,

-the points from the inner surface of the outer torus
are united with the points from the outer surface of the
60 inner torus, by uniting curves contained in the
perpendicular plane in such a way that these uniting curves
are not intersecting each other and they are contained in
the space between the toruses, in such a way that the four
points, the uniting curves and the intersecting lines are
65 defining a closed plane surface or profile having at the
top and bottom the intersecting lines of the perpendicular
plane with the inner surface of the exterior torus and with
the outer surface of the interior torus and on the sides
the said uniting curves contained in the perpendicular
70 plane;

-the closed plane surface/profile defined as above being hereinafter named the generating closed surface/contouring/profile;

75 -it is important to remember that the generating closed surface/contouring/profile is contained in the perpendicular plane therefore is all the time perpendicular on the wave form curve, the upper and lower lines varying depending on the intersection with the toruses surfaces;

80 -the generating process is started from a starting point which can be any point on the wave form curve but for the ease of understanding it is supposed to start from a point where the wave form curve is intersecting the median circle;

85 -the surface/solid generating process is done by moving the generating closed surface/contouring/profile along the wave form curve respecting the above conditions, the uniting curves describing/contouring the surface structure of the said wave form undulating structure between the toruses;

90 -whereby the toruses, the waveform undulating structure being unitized/rigidized together by casting or any other known approach, forming a toroidal elastic structure having an inner diameter, which is the inner diameter of the interior torus and an outside diameter which is the outside diameter of the exterior torus;

95 -whereby the toroidal elastic structure having on the outside applied a rim for rolling and at the inside a hub by this the assembly made of the toroidal elastic structure and the rim and hub becoming a wheel;

2. A class of non pneumatic tires as in the claim 1 characterized by the fact that the wave form curve on the outer surface of the inner torus being defined as follows:

5 -a curve in form of a semicircle called semicircle module having a beginning and an end these being diametrically opposed;

-the inner torus being cut with a plane containing its axis of symmetry; the inner torus then is unfolded and on the unfolded outer surface and in reference with the median circle above defined and also unfolded, a wave form curve is traced characterized by the fact that is formed of a succession of semicircle modules all having the same radius;

-therefore if the wave form curve is starting from a point on the median circle, there we have placed the first semicircle module with the beginning in the starting point and the end diametrically opposed but on the median circle unfolded, and after this another semicircle module but rotated accordingly to permit a continuation of the waveform curve; so the wave form curve is a continuous unicursal succession of semicircle modules;

-then the unfolded torus with the waveform curve as described above is brought back to toroidal form, in this way having the wave form curve defined on the outer surface of the inner torus;

-a contouring profile is defined as above except the fact that the uniting curves are straight lines intersecting with the axis of symmetry/rotation of the toruses therefore all the time perpendicular on the outer surface of the inner torus and on the inner surface of the exterior torus;

-whereby the straight lines as defined above are equally distanced from the wave form curve on the inner surface of the inner torus;

-whereby at the areas of intersection of the waveform structure and the inner/outer surfaces of the toruses there are provided appropriate fillets to reduce the concentration stresses;

-whereby the wave like structure has a width which is twice the amplitude of the wave which is less than the width of the toruses;

3. A non-pneumatic tire for mounting upon a wheel hub, wherein the tire has an axis of rotation and a central plane perpendicular to the axis of rotation and wherein the tire is comprised of:

5 a) an exterior torus which

1) has an outside diameter and has a constant inside diameter and

2) is symmetric about the axis of rotation;

b) an interior torus which

10 1) is mountable upon the wheel hub,

2) has an inside diameter and a constant outside diameter,

3) is symmetric about the axis of rotation and

15 4) is positioned between the exterior torus inside diameter and the axis of rotation;

c) wherein the interior torus outside diameter is less than the exterior torus inside diameter thereby defining a space between the exterior torus and the interior torus;

20 d) a flexing structure comprised of a wall extending within the space between and connecting to the exterior torus at the inside diameter and the interior torus at the outside diameter and

25 e) wherein the wall follows the path of an undulating curved line projected from the interior torus at the outside diameter upon the exterior torus at the inside diameter.

4. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 3 wherein the curved line is sinusoidal.

5. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 4 wherein the curved line is symmetric about the central plane.

6. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 5 wherein the curved line crosses through and intersects with the central plane.

7. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 6 wherein the curved line is perpendicular to the central plane at the intersection with the central plane.

8. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 4 wherein the curved line forms a plurality of continuous wavelengths about the central plane.

9. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 8 wherein each wavelength has a maximum amplitude and the maximum amplitude of each wavelength is equal.

10. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 8 wherein there are a integer number of wavelengths about the tire.

11. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 3 wherein the wall has a quadrilateral cross-section and the cross-section has equal thickness along the entire wall.

12. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 11 wherein the wall is rectangular.

13. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 3 wherein each torus has a width and the inside diameter of the exterior torus and the outside diameter of the interior torus exterior are uniform across their respective widths.

14. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 13 wherein the widths of the exterior torus and the interior torus are identical.

15. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 3 wherein the interior torus is symmetric about the central plane.

16. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 3 wherein the exterior torus is symmetric about the central plane.

17. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 3 wherein the material of the tire is flexible.

18. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 17 wherein the material of the tire is polyurethane.

19. A non-pneumatic tire having an axis of rotation and a central plane perpendicular to the axis of rotation comprised of:

a) a wheel hub;

b) an exterior torus which

1) has an outside diameter and has a constant inside diameter and

2) is symmetric about the axis of rotation;

c) an interior torus which

1) is mounted upon the wheel hub,

2) has an inside diameter and a constant outside diameter,

3) is symmetric about the axis of rotation and

4) is positioned between the exterior torus inside diameter and the axis of rotation;

d) wherein the interior torus outside diameter is less than the exterior torus inside diameter thereby defining a space between the exterior torus and the interior torus;

e) a flexing structure comprised of a wall extending within the space between and connecting to the exterior torus at the inside diameter and the interior torus at the outside diameter and

f) wherein the wall follows the path of an undulating curved line projected from the interior torus at the outside diameter upon the exterior torus at the inside diameter.

AMENDED CLAIMS

[received by the International Bureau on 12 June 2000 (12.06.00);
original claims 1, 2 and 4 cancelled; original claims 3, 13 and 19 amended and renumbered as
claims 1, 10 and 16; new claim 17 added; claims 5-12 and 14-18 renumbered as claims 2-
9 and 11-15; other claims unchanged (5 pages)]

1. A non-pneumatic tire for mounting upon a
wheel hub, wherein the tire has an axis of rotation and a
central plane perpendicular to the axis of rotation and
5 wherein the tire is comprised of:

a) an exterior torus

1) which has an outside diameter and has
a constant inside diameter and
2) which is symmetric about the axis of
10 rotation;

b) an interior torus

1) which is mountable upon the wheel
hub,
2) which has an inside diameter and a
15 constant outside diameter,
3) which is symmetric about the axis of
rotation and

4) which is positioned between the
exterior torus inside diameter and the axis of rotation;

20 c) wherein the interior torus outside diameter
is less than the exterior torus inside diameter thereby
defining a space between the exterior torus and the
interior torus;

d) a flexing structure comprised of a wall
25 extending within the space between and connecting to the
exterior torus at the inside diameter and the interior
torus at the outside diameter and

e) wherein the wall follows the path of an
undulating curved line projected from the interior torus
30 at the outside diameter upon the exterior torus at the
inside diameter and wherein the wall has a constant

radial length between the outside diameter of the interior torus and the inside diameter of the outer torus.

5 2. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 1 wherein the curved line is symmetric about the central plane.

10 3. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 2 wherein the curved line crosses through and intersects with the central plane

15 4. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 3 wherein the curved line is perpendicular to the central plane at the intersection with the central plane.

wall.

9. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 8 wherein the wall is rectangular.

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10. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 1 wherein each torus has a width and the inside diameter of the exterior torus and the outside diameter of the interior torus are uniform across their respective widths.

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11. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 10 wherein the widths of the exterior torus and the interior torus are identical.

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12. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 1 wherein the interior torus is symmetric about the central plane.

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13. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 1 wherein the exterior torus is symmetric about the central plane.

14. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 1 wherein the material of the tire is flexible.

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15. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 14 wherein the material of the tire is polyurethane.

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16. A non-pneumatic tire having an axis of rotation and a central plane perpendicular to the axis of

rotation comprised of:

- a) a wheel hub;
- b) an exterior torus
 - 1) which has an outside diameter and has
5 a constant inside diameter and
 - 2) which is symmetric about the
axis of rotation;
- c) an interior torus
 - 1) which is mounted upon the wheel
10 hub,
 - 2) which has an inside diameter and
a constant outside diameter,
 - 3) which is symmetric about the
axis of rotation and
 - 15 4) which is positioned between the
exterior torus inside diameter and the axis of rotation;
- d) wherein the interior torus outside
diameter is less than the exterior torus inside diameter
thereby defining a space between the exterior torus and
20 the interior torus;
- e) a flexing structure comprised of a wall
extending within the space between and connecting to the
exterior torus at the inside diameter and the interior
torus at the outside diameter and
- 25 f) wherein the wall follows the path of an
undulating curved line projected from the interior torus
at the outside diameter upon the exterior torus at the
inside diameter and wherein the wall has a constant
radial length between the outside diameter of the
30 interior torus and the inside diameter of the outer
torus.

16. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 1 wherein the curved line is sinusoidal.

5 17. The non-pneumatic tire according to claim 3 wherein the curved line is comprised of a series of connected opposing semi-circles.

STATEMENT UNDER ARTICLE 19

In response to the International Search Report mailed April 11, 2000, the claims have been amended, as indicated on the attached Amendment Under Article 19 to more clearly distinguish the Applicant's invention from the teaching of United States Patent No. 3,604,756 to Gruber (the Gruber patent).

The Applicant's invention is directed to a non-pneumatic tire having an exterior torus and an interior torus, wherein a flexing structure is comprised of a wall extending between the exterior torus and the interior torus. To provide uniform stiffness about the circumference of the non-pneumatic tire, the wall has a constant radial length between the outside diameter of the inner torus and the inside diameter of the outer torus. Additionally, the wall follows a path of an undulating curved line, wherein the curved line may be sinusoidal or, preferably, may be comprised of a series of connected, opposing semicircles.

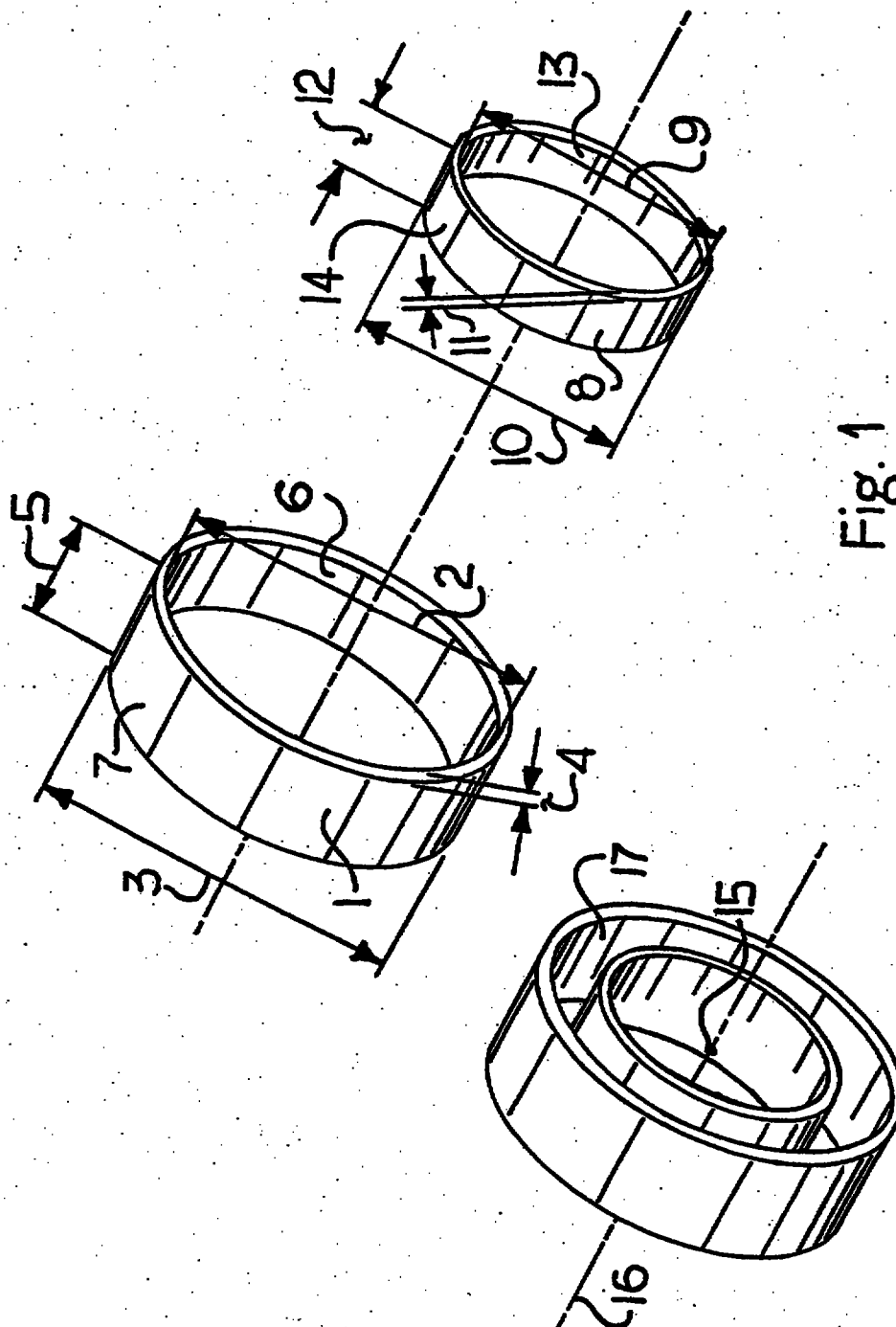
The Gruber patent, on the other hand, is directed to a plastic vehicle wheel having a body 12 made up of a hub 14 and an outer rim 18 connected with a web 24. As illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2 of the Gruber patent, the radial length of the web 24 between the hub 14 and the outer rim 18 is non-uniform. In particular, the web 24 follows the contour of the curved outer rim 18 such that, as illustrated in Fig. 1, some portions of the web 24 are longer than other portions of the web 24. This produces non-uniform stiffness around the circumference of the outer rim 18. Additionally, as illustrated in Fig. 4 of the Gruber patent, the web 24 at the hub 14 is comprised of a plurality of straight sections connected by crowns 28. These straight sections offer significantly less structural stability than do the curved sections of the Applicant's invention.

The text in column 1, lines 70-75 of the Gruber patent mentions a cylindrical or convex outer face may exist if a tire 22 is not used, however, there is no discussion or suggestion of the manner in which such a design would be incorporated. The only discussion appears in lines 74-75, and this implies the inner surface of the outer rim 18 would remain convex.

Originally filed claims 3 and 19 have been amended to reflect this. Furthermore, originally filed claim 4 has been cancelled, while amended claim 16 and new claim 17 specifying details of the curved line have been added. Claim 13 has been amended for an editorial correction.

No new subject matter is believed to have been added by this Amendment. Allowance of pending claims 1-17 is respectfully requested.

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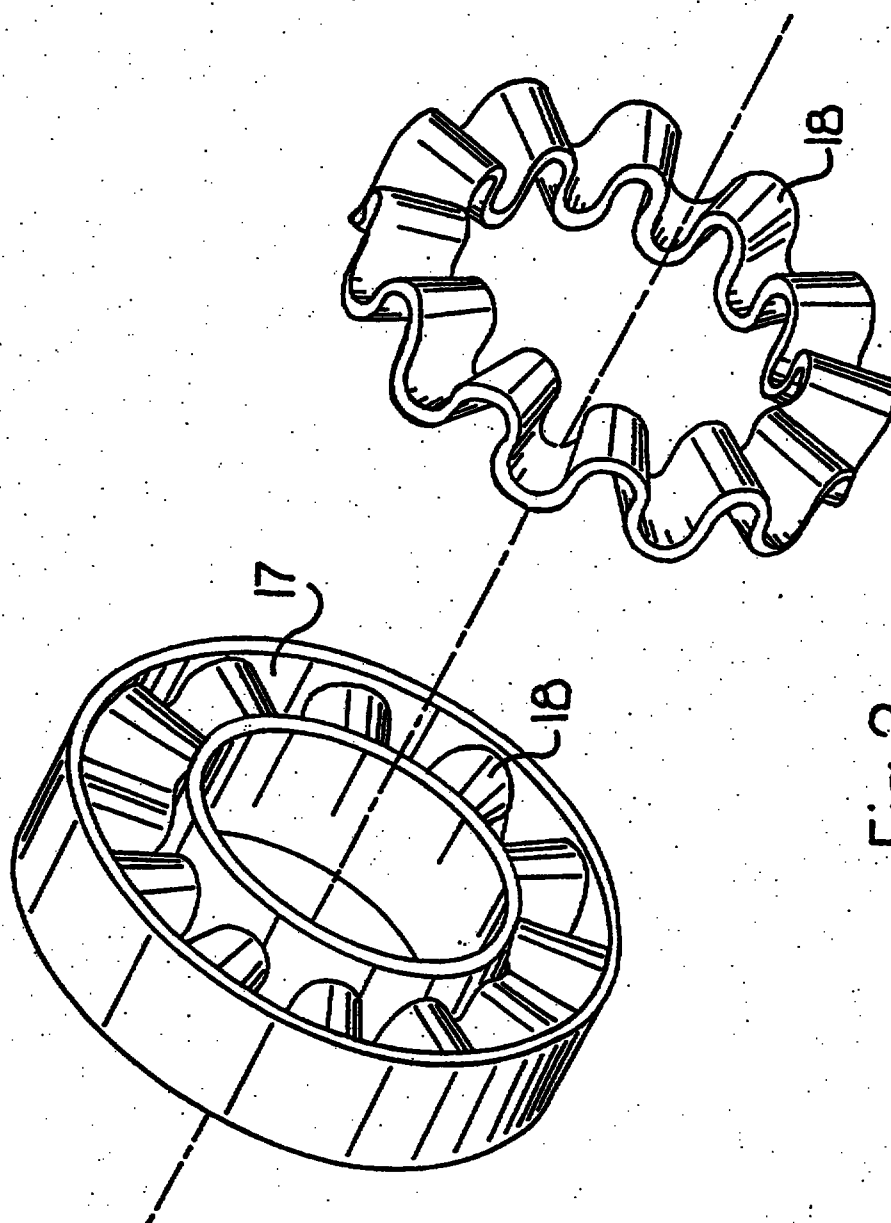


Fig. 2

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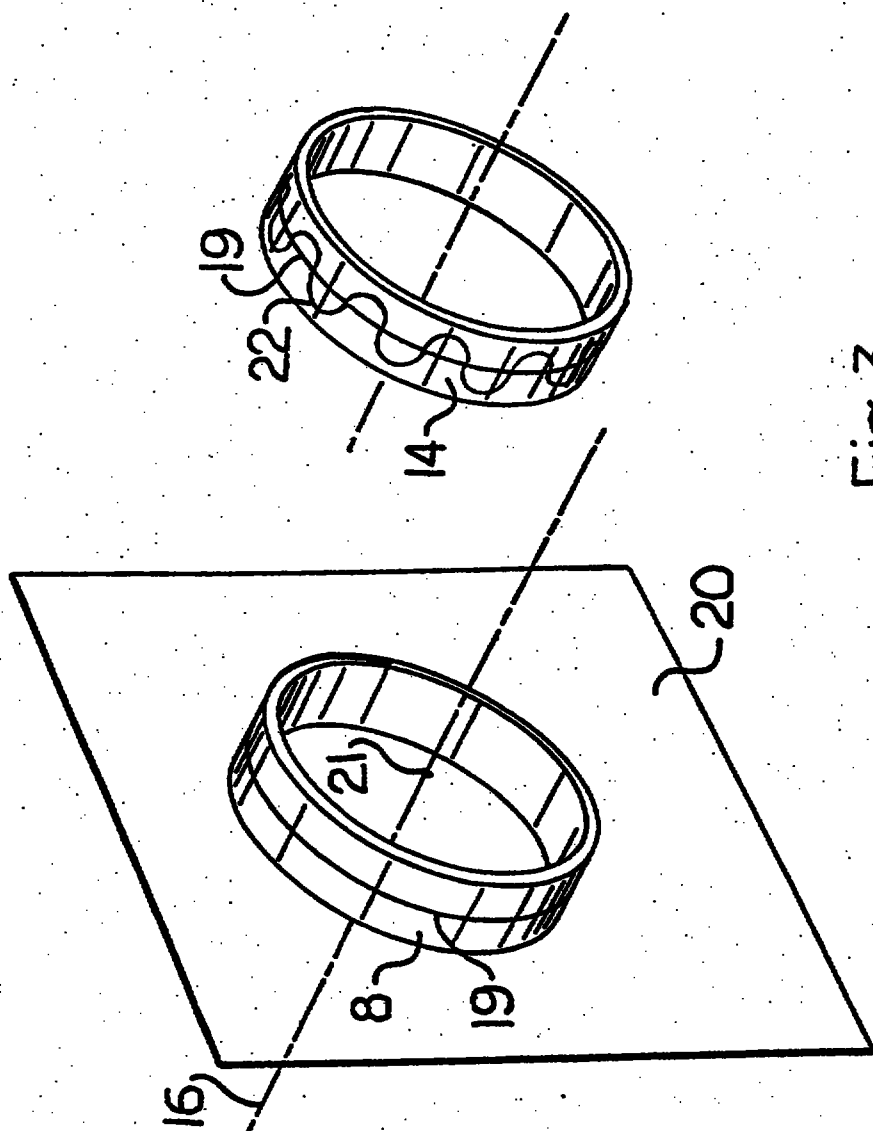


Fig. 3

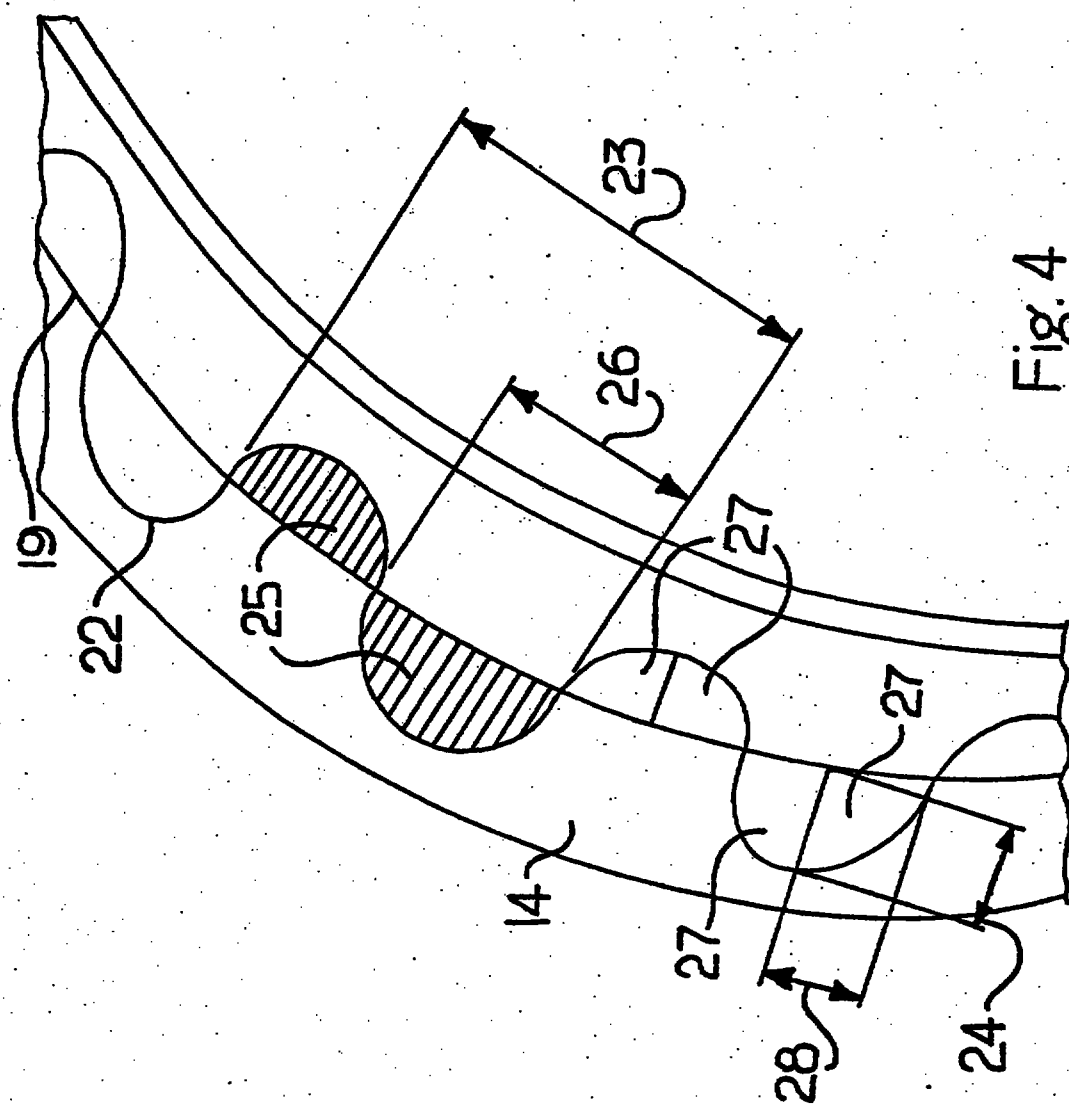


Fig. 4

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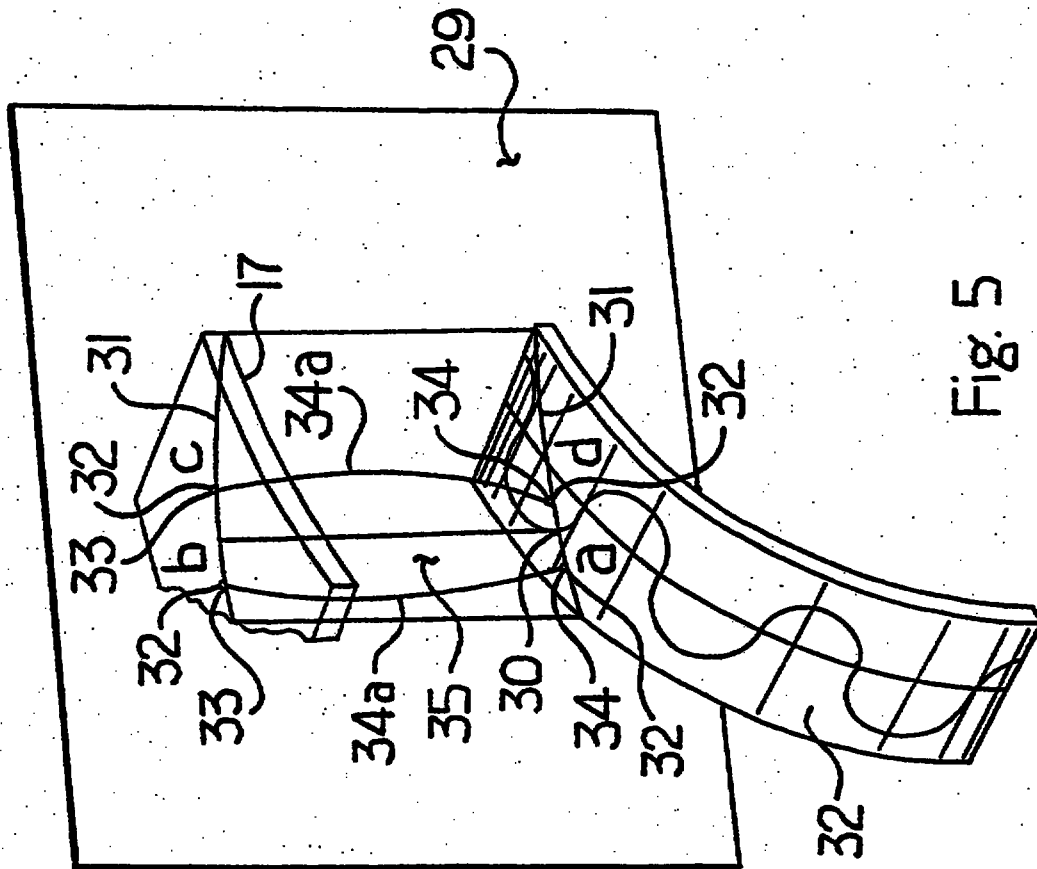


Fig. 5

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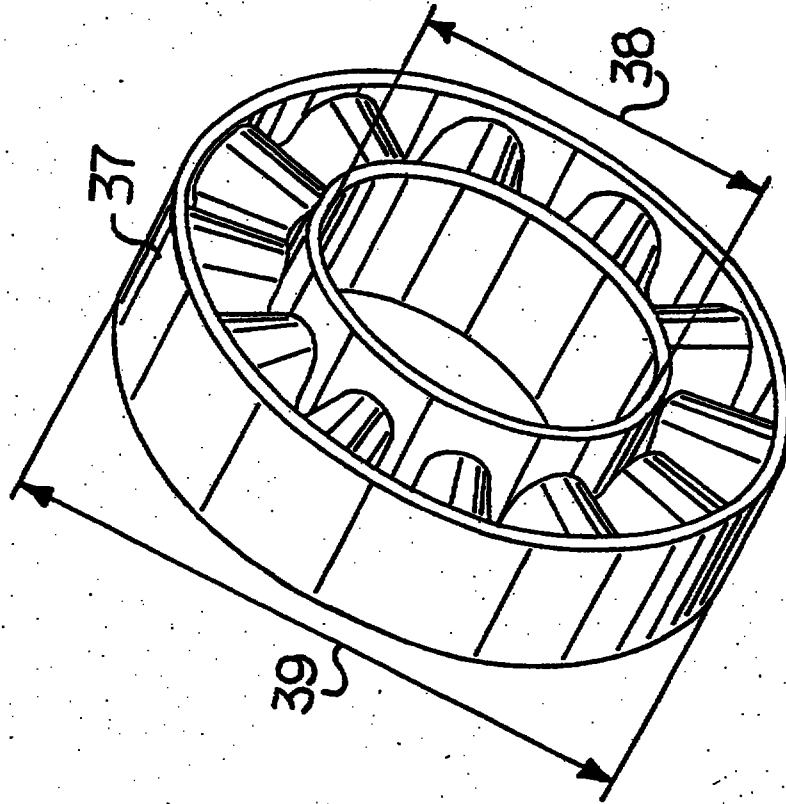
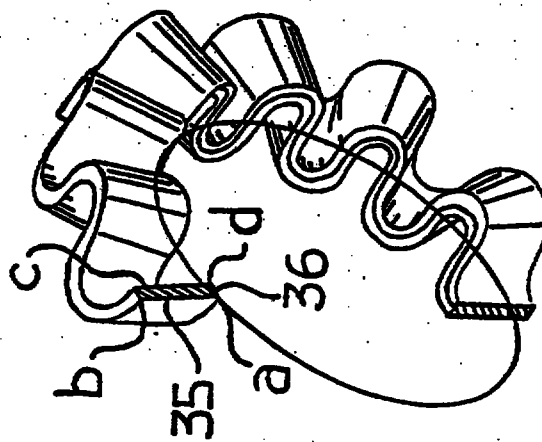


Fig. 6



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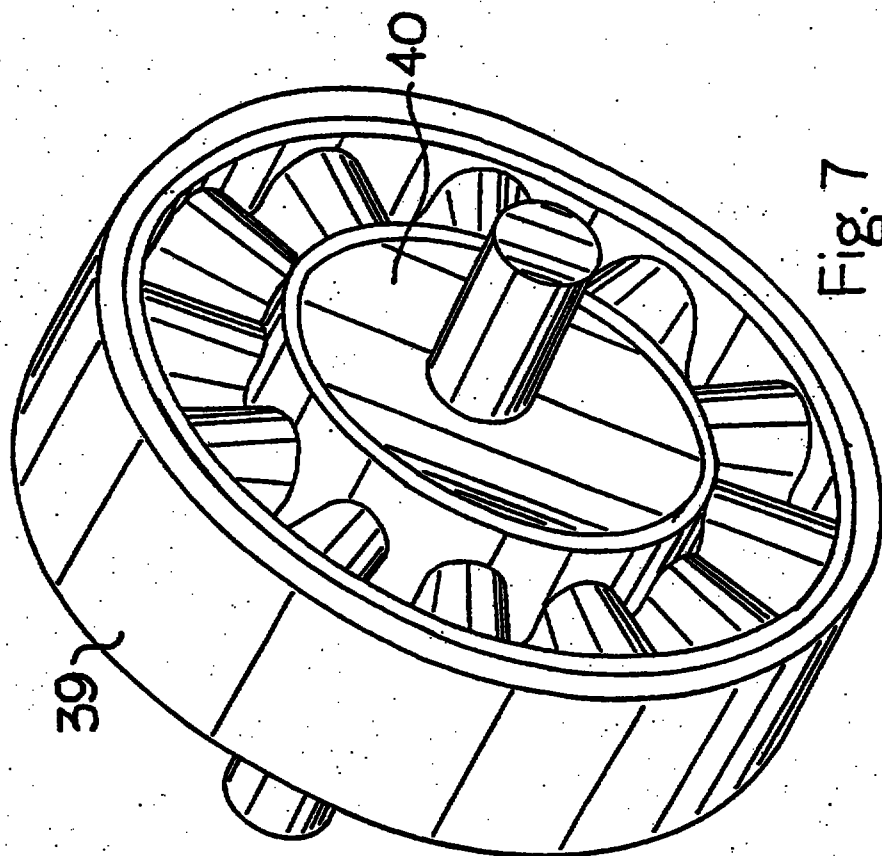


Fig. 7

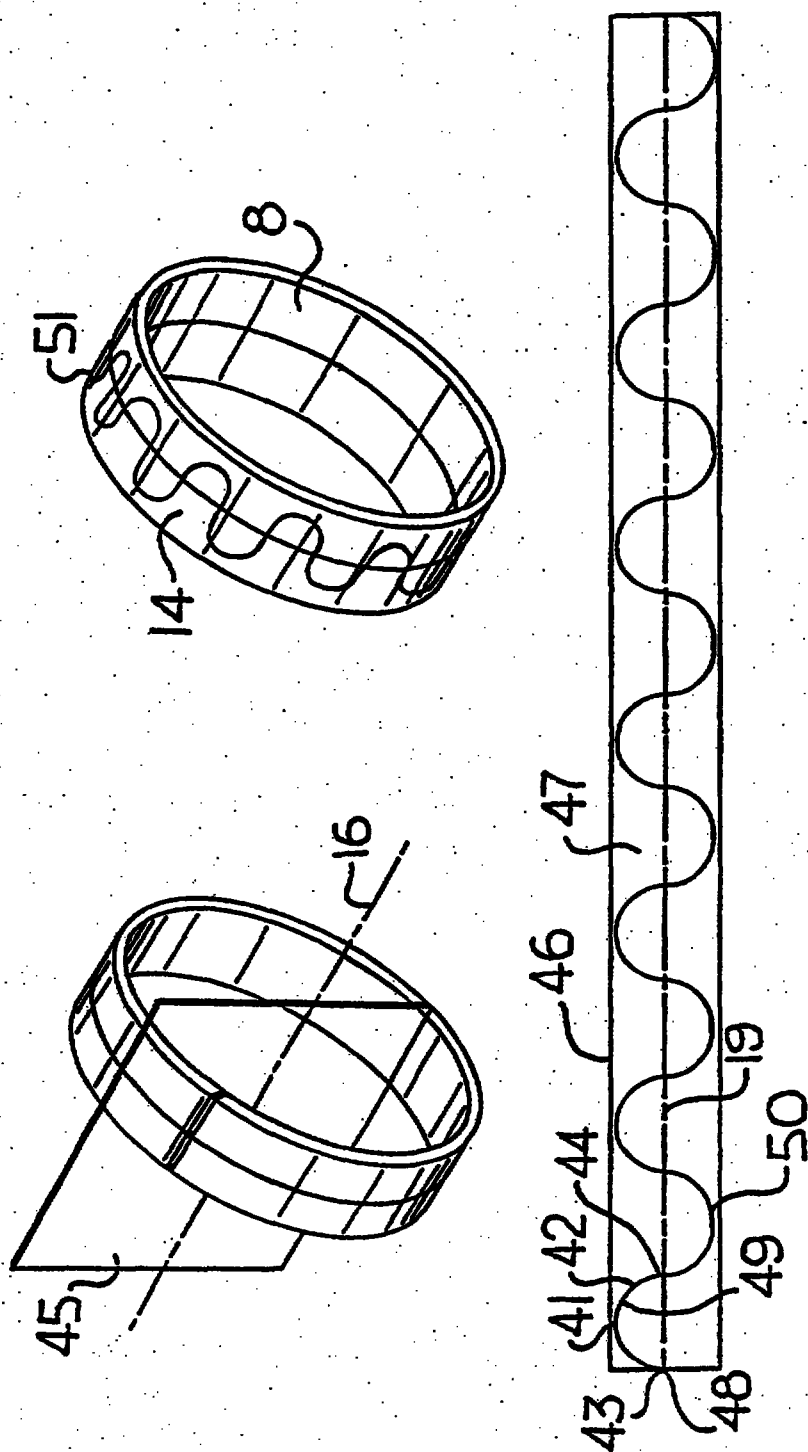


Fig. 8

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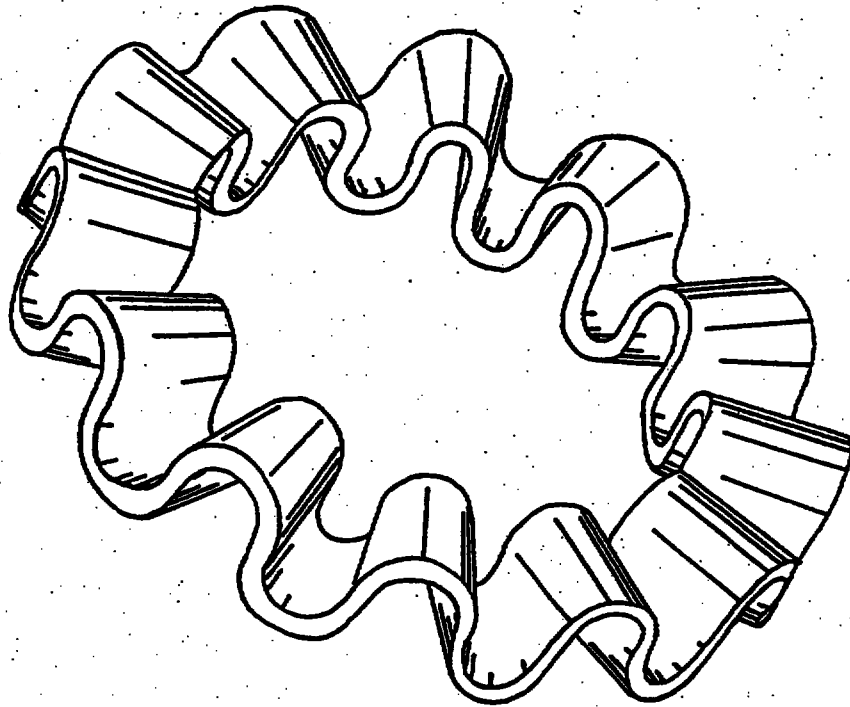
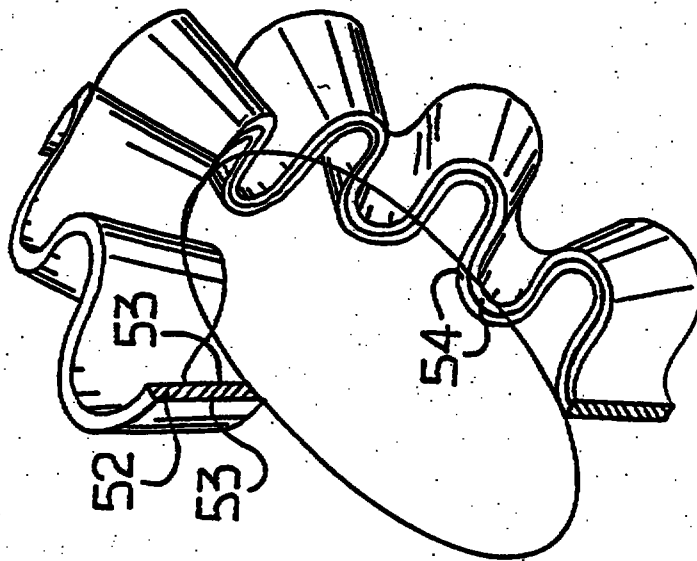


Fig. 9



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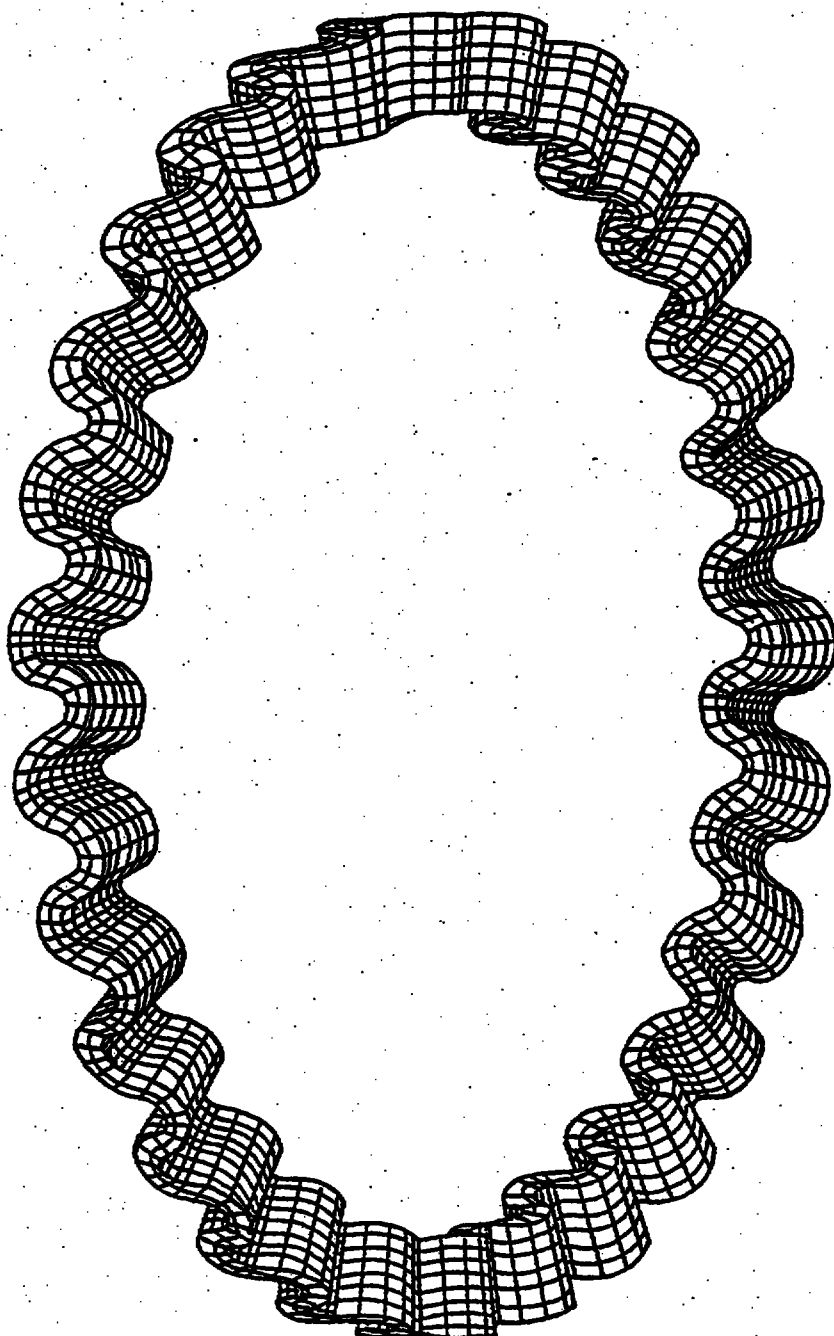


Fig. 10