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Stephens

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(54) **ANIMAL TRAP**

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Related U.S. Application Data

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A01M 23/34 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **A01M 23/34** (2013.01)
USPC **43/85; 43/81; 43/82; 43/86; 43/87**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
USPC 43/58, 81, 82, 85, 86, 87
See application file for complete search history.

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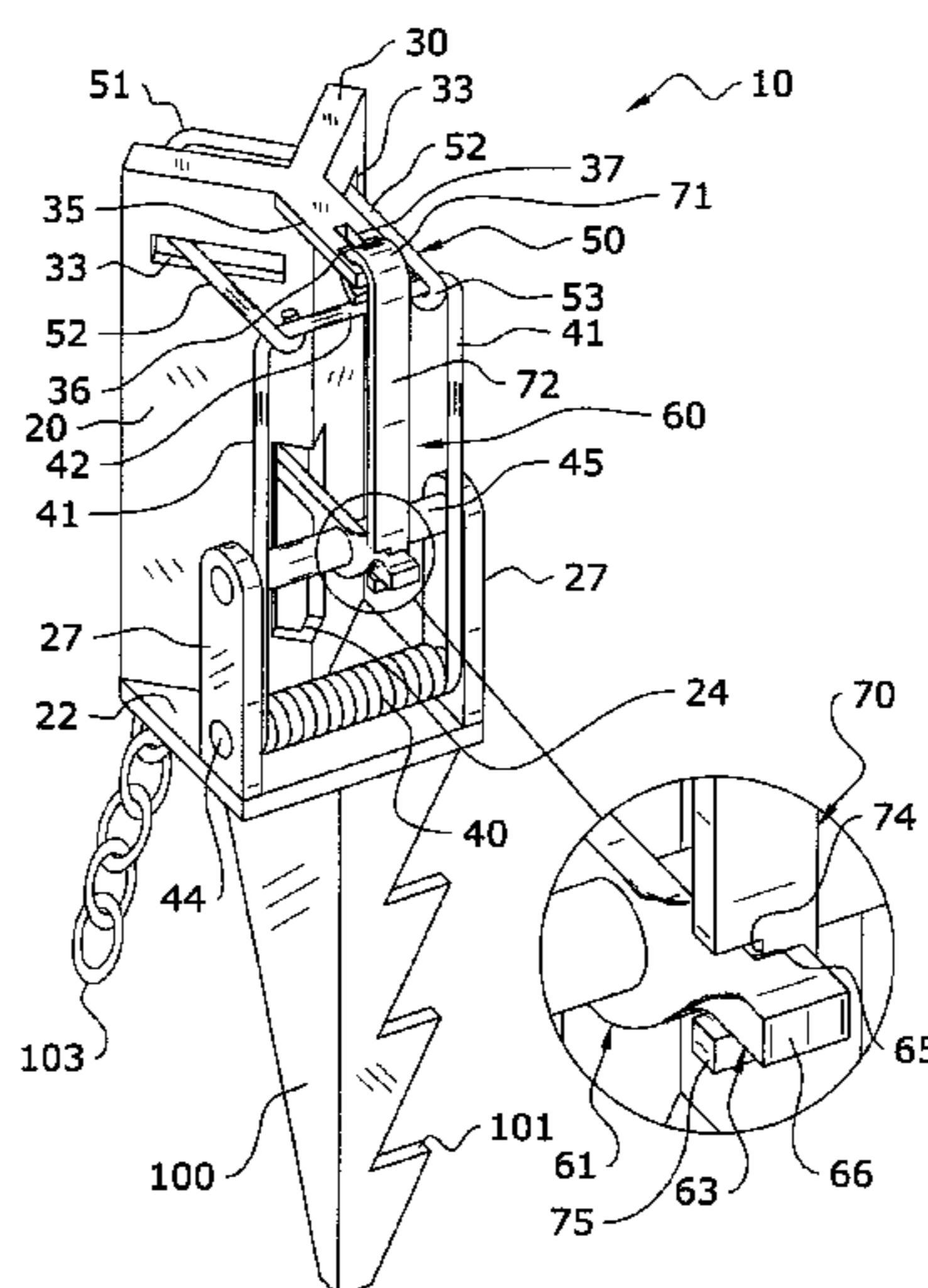
Assistant Examiner — Justin Benedik

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An animal trap for restraining animals, such as raccoons. The trap includes a hollow body having an entrance opening, an external and an internal grip member spaced apart along a longitudinal axis of the body, both having a V-shape, and a biased restraint member having a V-shape and adapted to move towards the grip members when released to engage an extremity of an animal inserted through the entrance opening. Two interchangeable trigger assemblies are each adapted to restrain the restraint member until proper engagement with a respective trigger member. The first trigger assembly releases the restraint member via a first directional force or an opposite second directional force applied to a first trigger member. The second trigger assembly releases the restraint member via only the first directional force applied to a second trigger member. A ground stake having jagged teeth and a swivel chain may be used for anchoring.

15 Claims, 13 Drawing Sheets



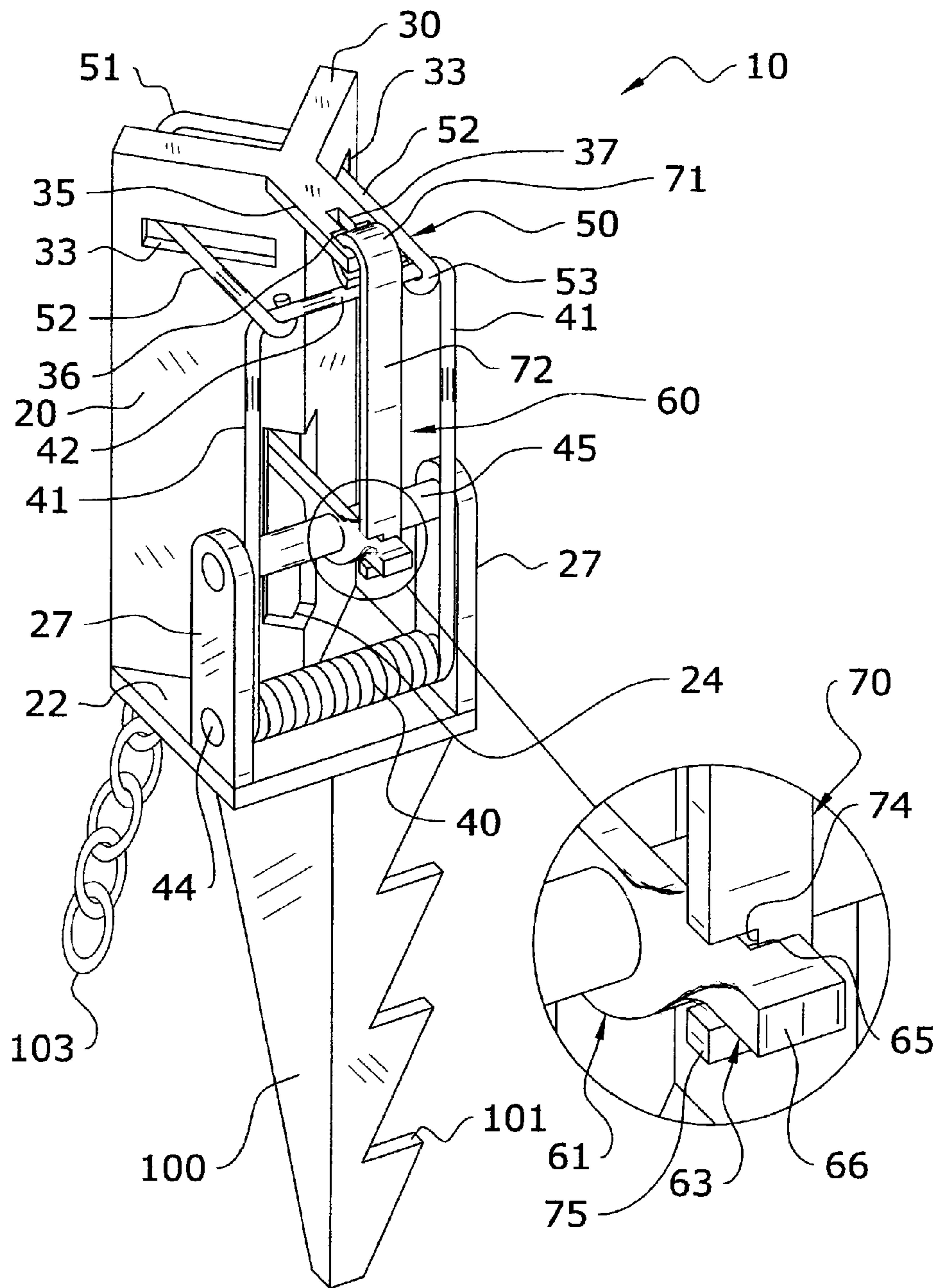


FIG. 1

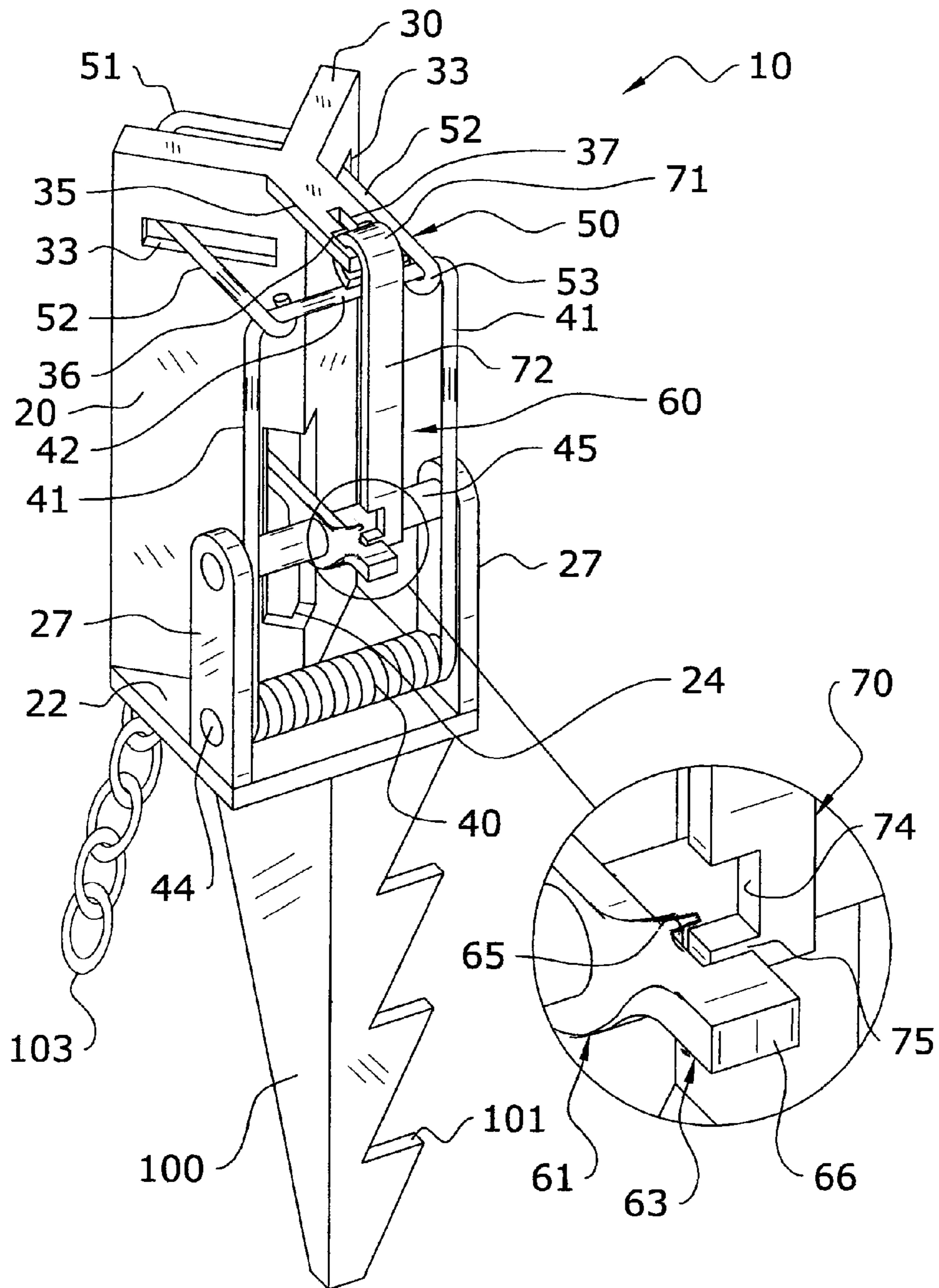


FIG. 2

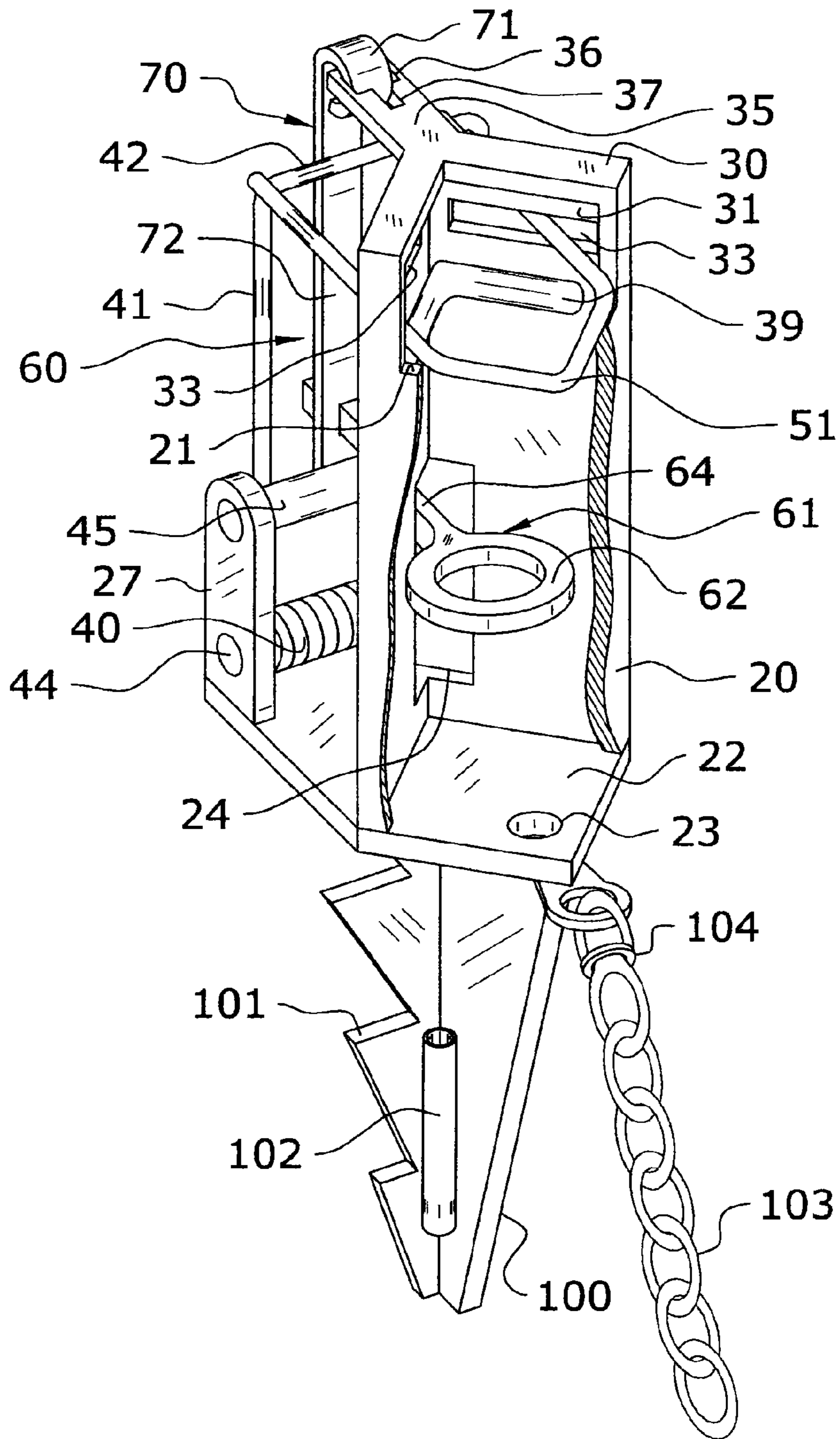


FIG. 3

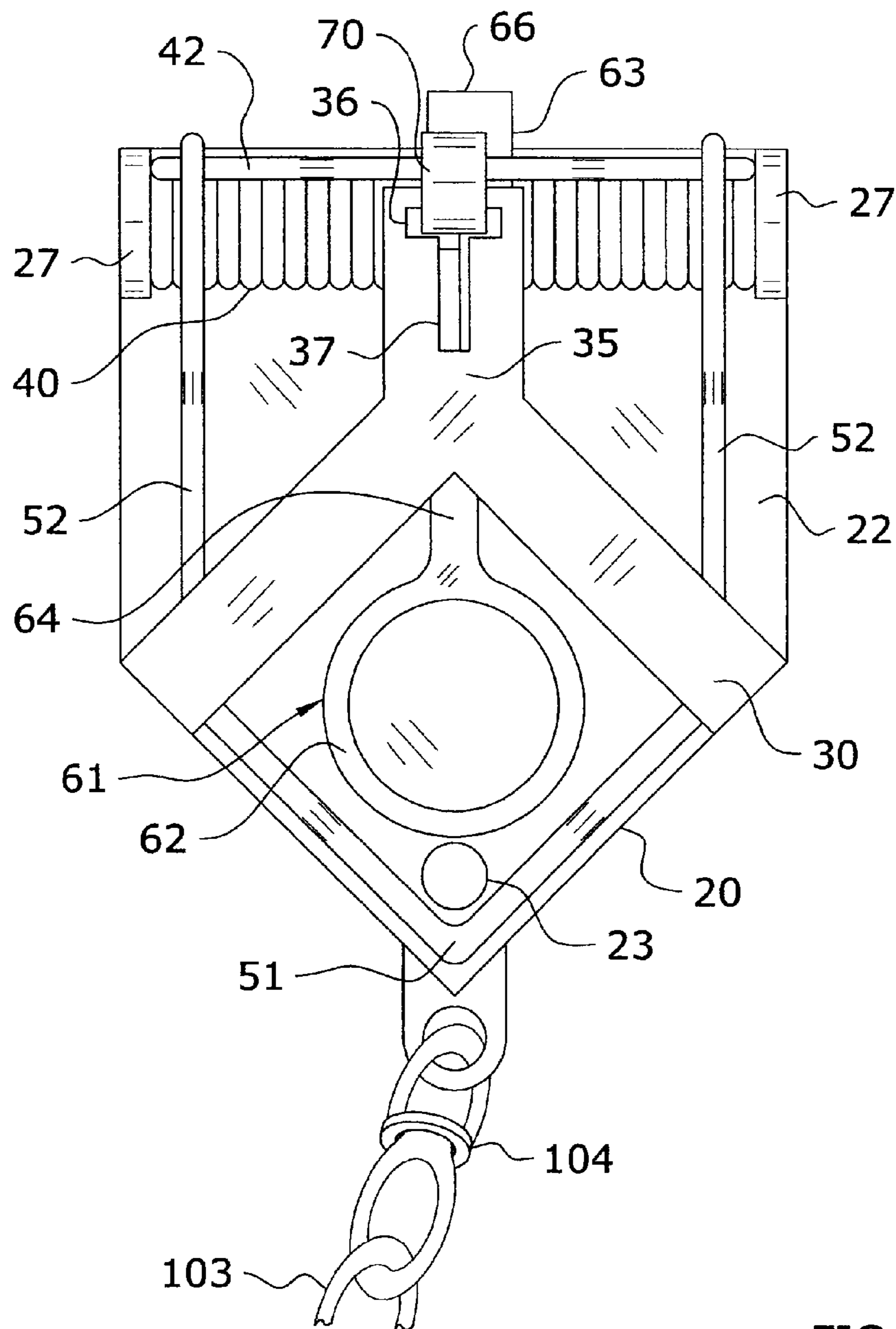


FIG. 4

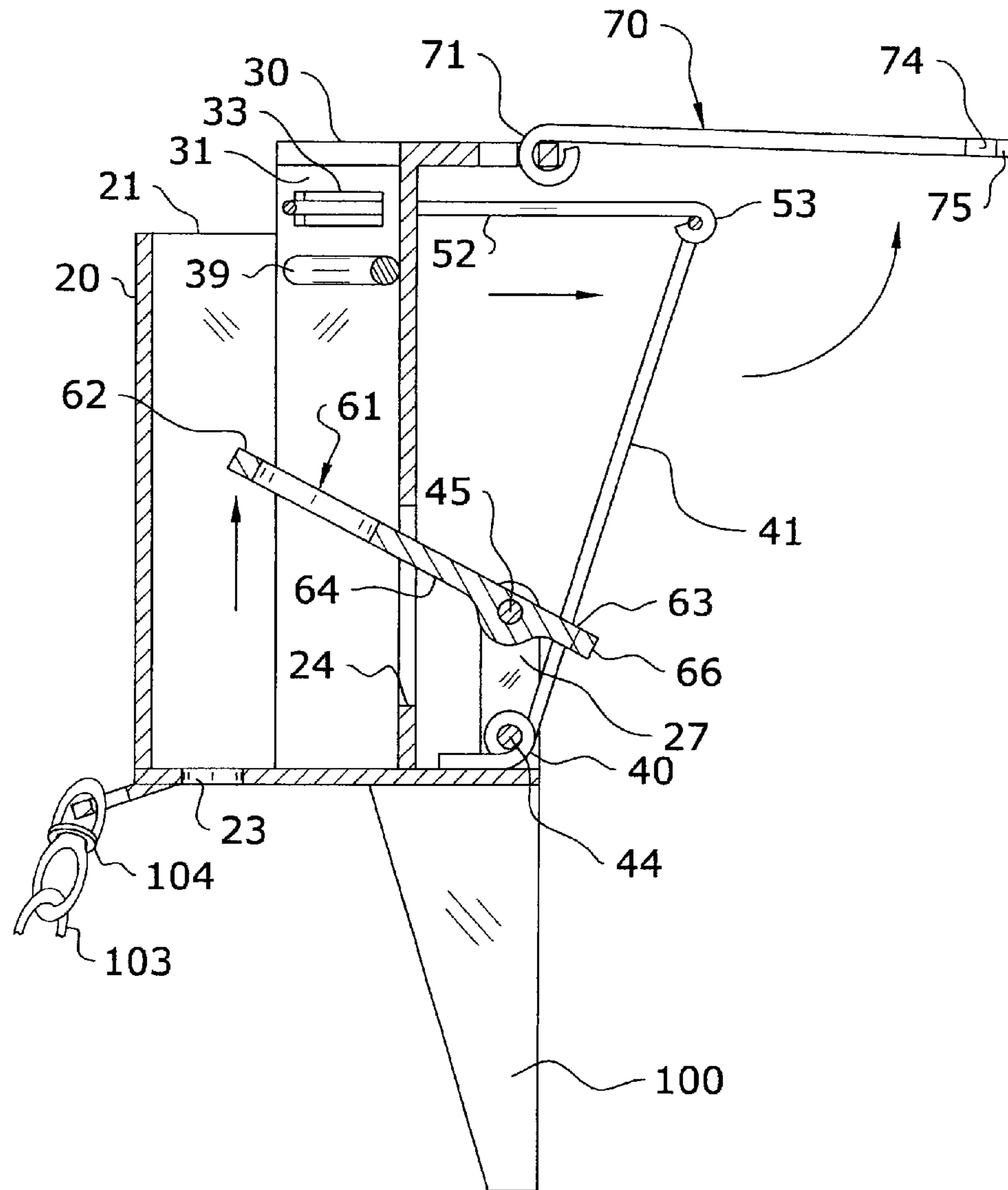


FIG. 5

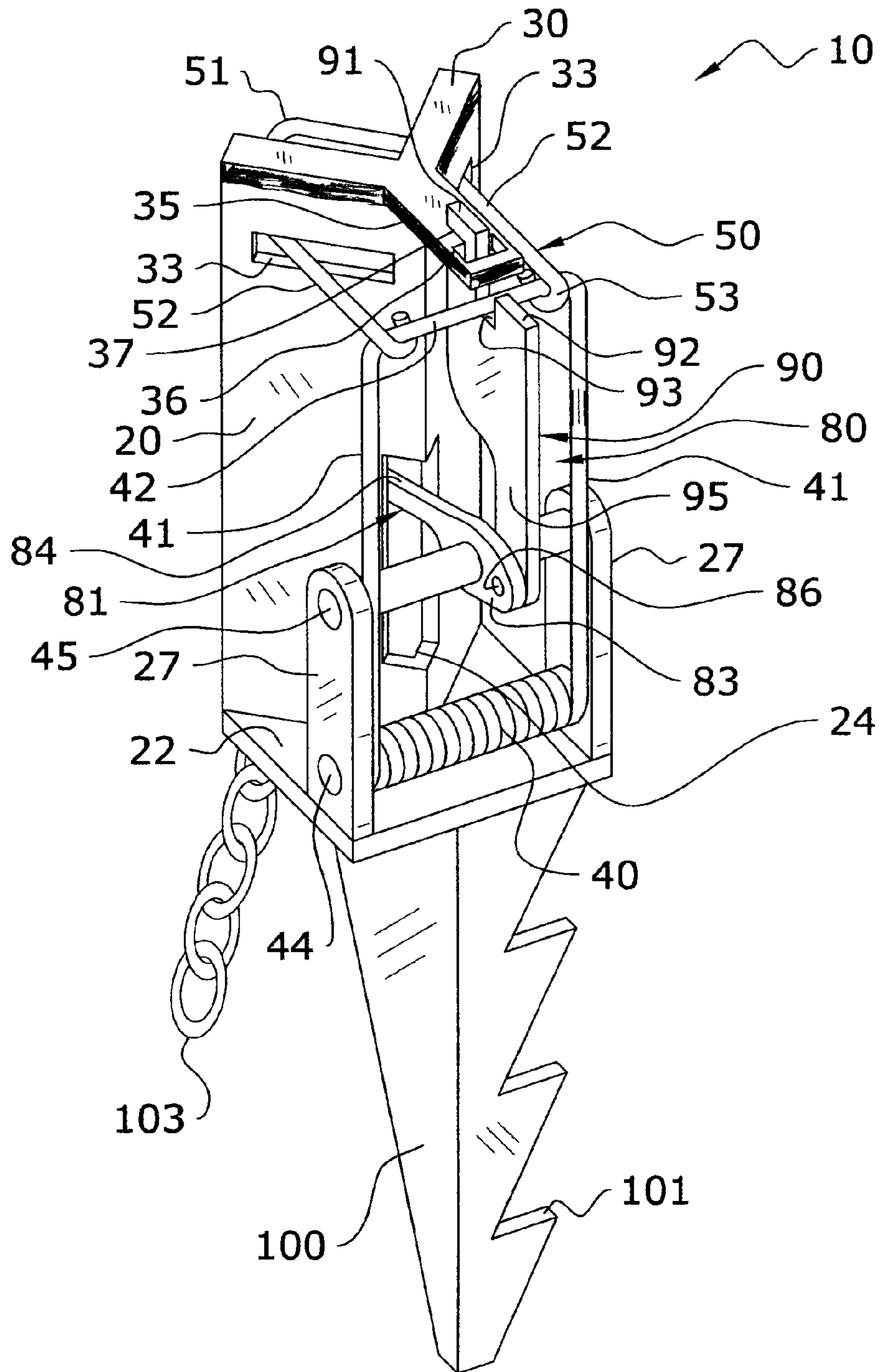


FIG. 7

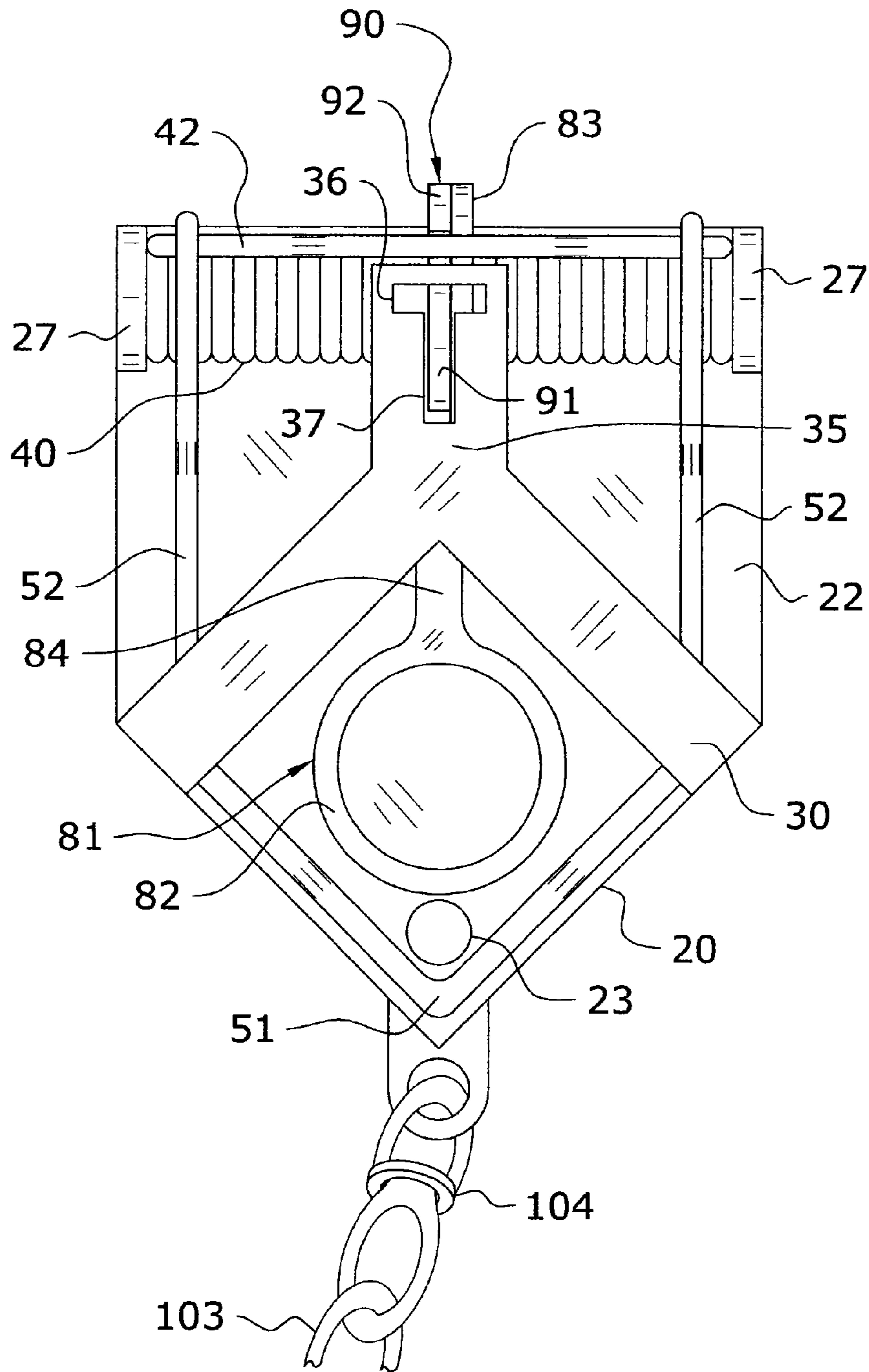


FIG. 8

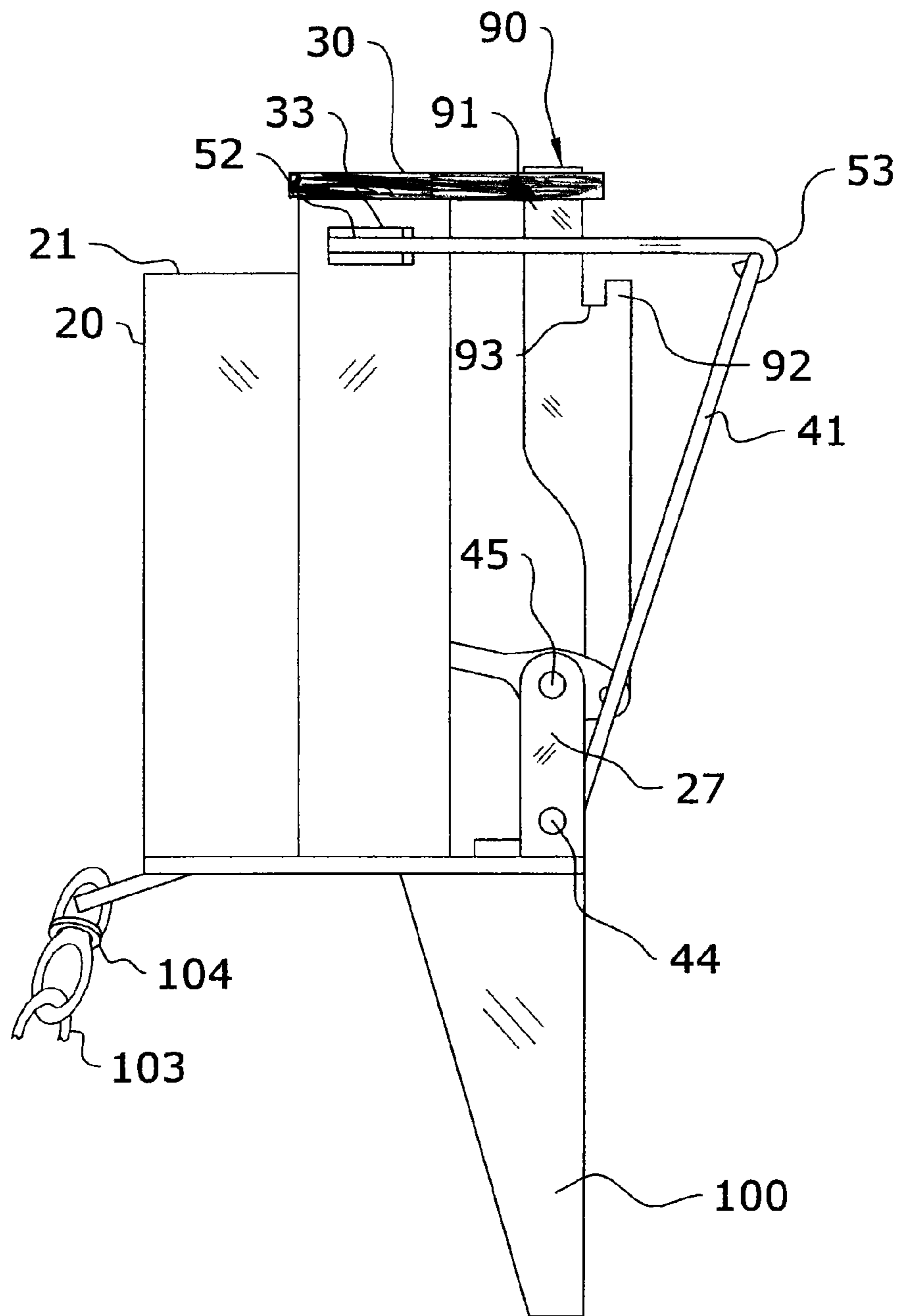


FIG. 9

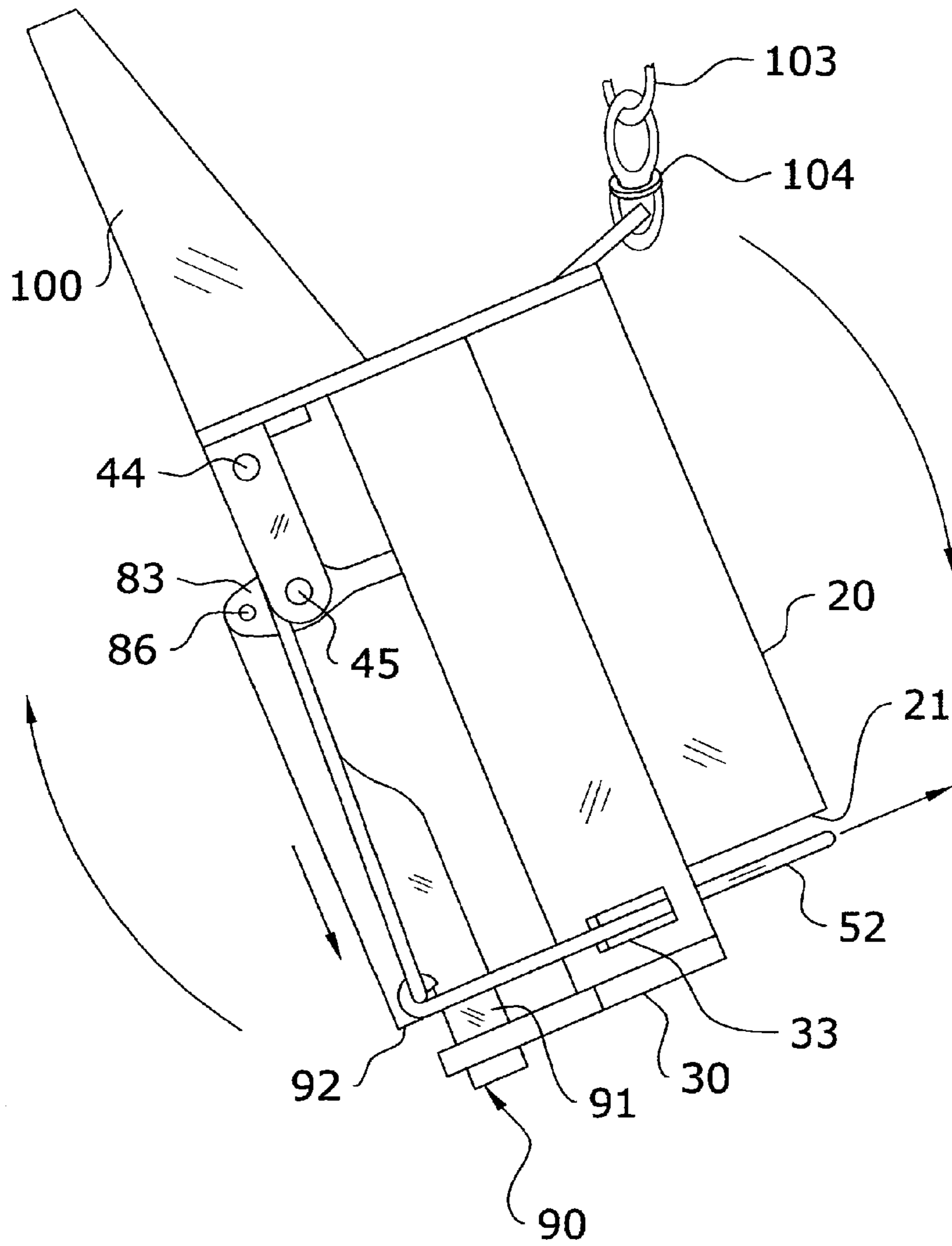


FIG. 10

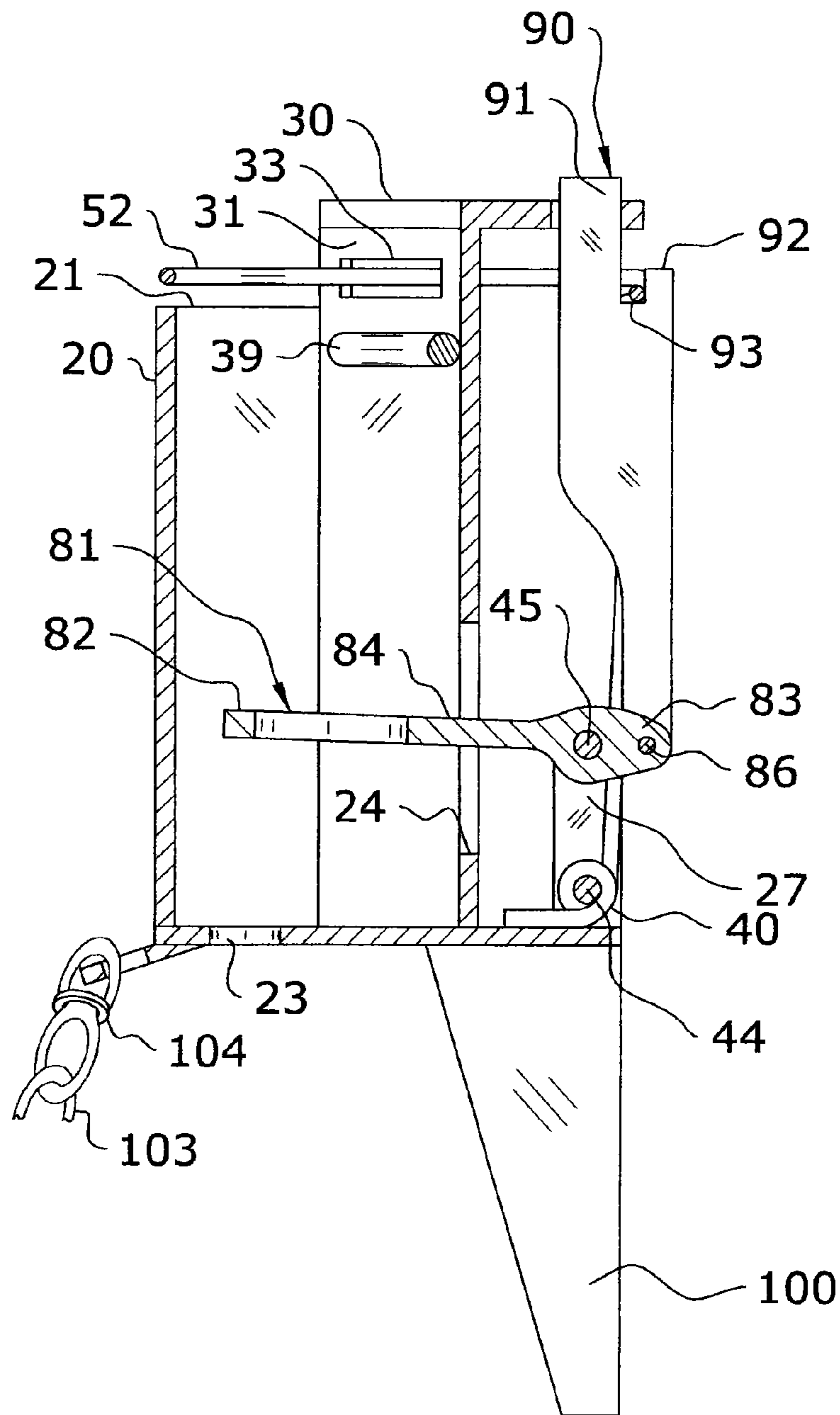


FIG. 11

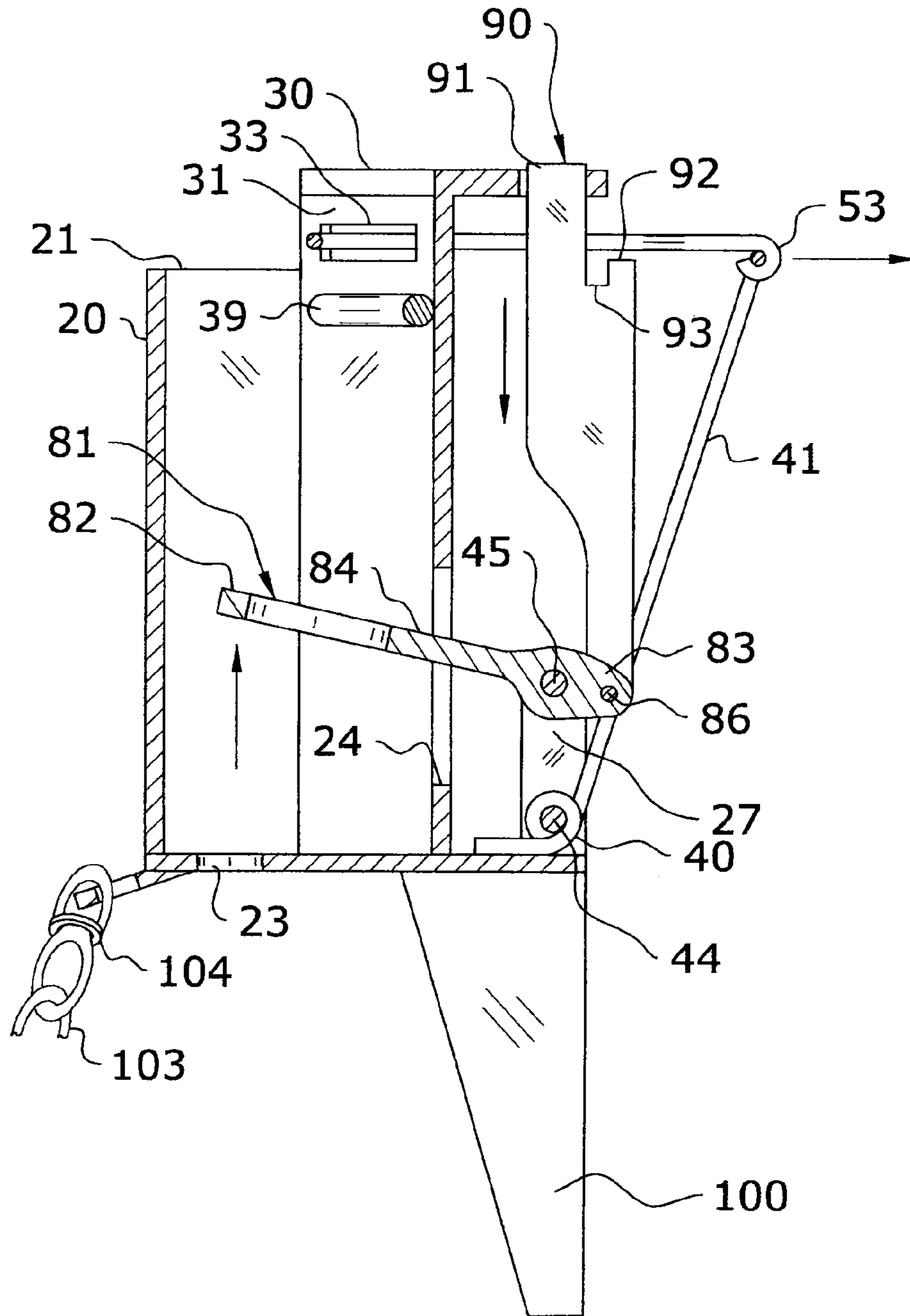


FIG. 12

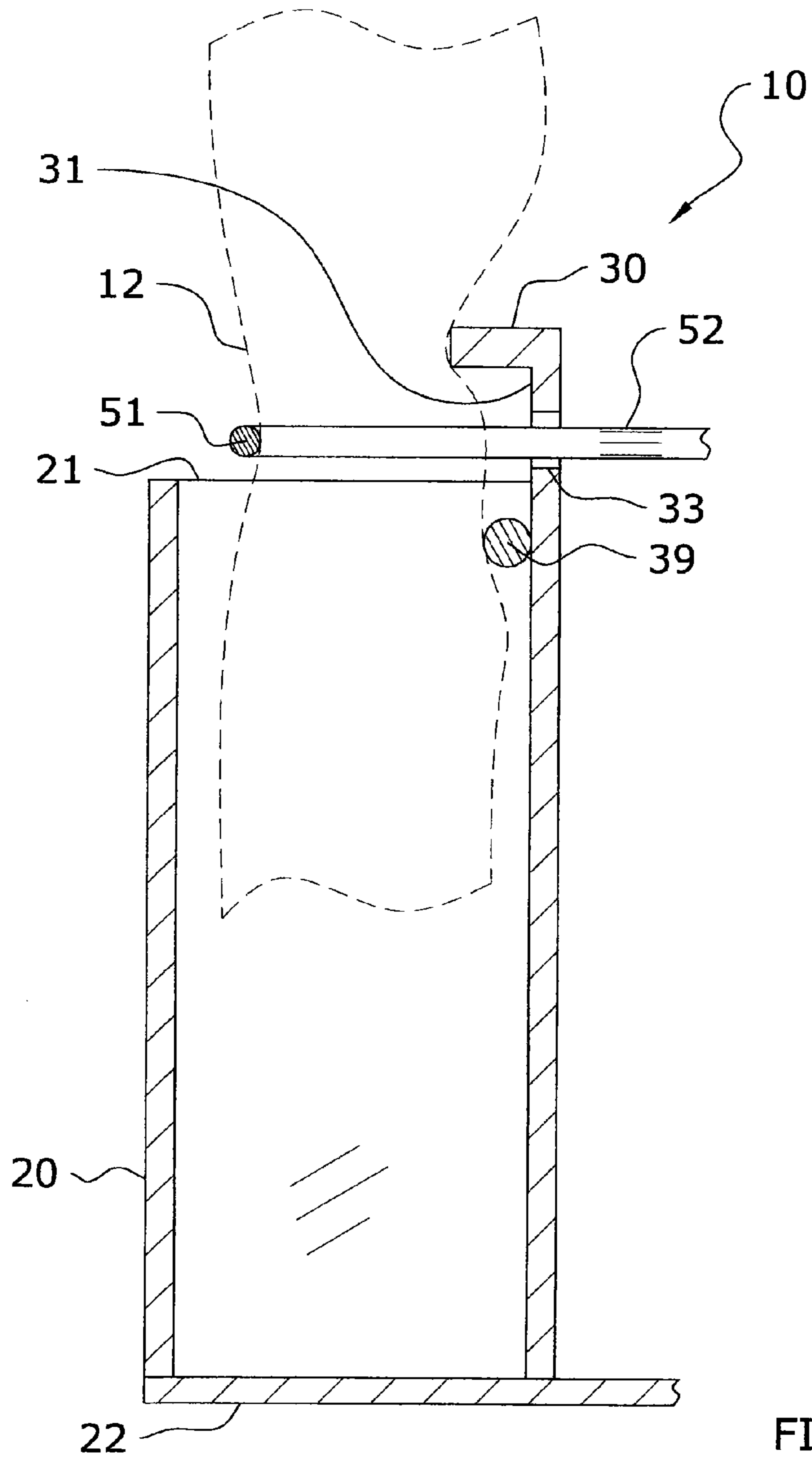


FIG. 13

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ANIMAL TRAP

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/881,241 filed Sep. 14, 2010.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY
SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

Not applicable.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates generally to a trap and more specifically it relates to an animal trap for efficiently restraining animals, such as raccoons, in a secure manner using a diamond-shaped restraint and having an interchangeable and easy-setting trigger which allows for a push-pull type or a pull-only type trigger and having an easy clean-out system for the trap.

2. Description of the Related Art

Any discussion of the related art throughout the specification should in no way be considered as an admission that such related art is widely known or forms part of common general knowledge in the field.

Various types of traps currently exist and are utilized to catch animals, such as raccoons. Current traps are generally either have a push or a pull-type trigger thus either not efficiently providing a means to engage the trap, wherein the animal may possibly retrieve the bait without causing the trap to engage, or not complying with local ordinances or laws. In addition, the traps are often enclosed in such a manner that it may be difficult to reset and/or clean the trap. Additionally, many of the traps have problems holding the animal after a catch and must rely on stronger springs, thus increasing the weight, the expense, the difficulty of setting the trap, as well as the danger of the trap to the trapper.

Because of the inherent problems with the related art, there is a need for a new and improved animal trap for efficiently restraining animals, such as raccoons, in a secure manner using a diamond-shaped restraint with spaced grip bars for increasing holding power and having an interchangeable and easy-setting trigger which allows for a push-pull type or a pull-only type trigger and having an easy clean-out system for the trap.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A system for efficiently restraining animals, such as raccoons, in a secure manner using a diamond-shaped restraint with spaced grip bars for increasing holding and having an interchangeable and easy-setting trigger which allows for a push-pull type or a pull-only type trap and having an easy clean-out system for the trap. The invention generally relates to a trap which includes a hollow body having an entrance opening, an external and an internal grip member spaced apart along a longitudinal axis of the body, both having a V-shape, and a biased restraint member having a V-shape and adapted to move towards the grip members when released to engage an extremity of an animal inserted through the entrance opening. Two interchangeable trigger assemblies are each adapted to restrain the restraint member until proper engagement with a respective trigger member. The first trigger assembly releases the restraint member via a first direc-

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tional force or an opposite second directional force applied to a first trigger member. The second trigger assembly releases the restraint member via only the first directional force applied to a second trigger member. A ground stake having jagged teeth and a swivel chain may be used for anchoring.

There has thus been outlined, rather broadly, some of the features of the invention in order that the detailed description thereof may be better understood, and in order that the present contribution to the art may be better appreciated. There are additional features of the invention that will be described hereinafter and that will form the subject matter of the claims appended hereto. In this respect, before explaining at least one embodiment of the invention in detail, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited in its application to the details of construction or to the arrangements of the components set forth in the following description or illustrated in the drawings. The invention is capable of other embodiments and of being practiced and carried out in various ways. Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology and terminology employed herein are for the purpose of the description and should not be regarded as limiting.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Various other objects, features and attendant advantages of the present invention will become fully appreciated as the same becomes better understood when considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which like reference characters designate the same or similar parts throughout the several views, and wherein:

FIG. 1 is a rear upper perspective view of the present invention with the first trigger assembly in the safety position.

FIG. 2 is a rear upper perspective view of the present invention with the first trigger assembly in the armed position.

FIG. 3 is a front upper perspective view of the present invention with a portion of the body cutaway to show the trigger end of the first trigger member.

FIG. 4 is a top view of the present invention with the first trigger assembly.

FIG. 5 is a side sectional view of the present invention showing a pulling force being applied to the first trigger member to engage the restraint member.

FIG. 6 is a side sectional view of the present invention showing a pushing force being applied to the first trigger member to engage the restraint member.

FIG. 7 is a rear upper perspective view of the present invention with the second trigger assembly.

FIG. 8 is a top view of the present invention with the second trigger assembly.

FIG. 9 is a side sectional view of the present invention with the second trigger assembly with the spring disengaged.

FIG. 10 is a side sectional view of the present invention with the second trigger assembly with the spring engaged and the trap rotated so that the latch dog of the second trigger assembly falls into place to retain the spring in the engaged position.

FIG. 11 is a side sectional view of the present invention with the second trigger assembly in the engaged position.

FIG. 12 is a side sectional view of the present invention showing a pulling force being applied to the second trigger member to release the restraint member.

FIG. 13 is a side sectional view of the present invention with the extremity of the animal restrained.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

A. Overview.

Turning now descriptively to the drawings, in which similar reference characters denote similar elements throughout the several views, FIGS. 1 through 13 illustrate an animal trap 10, which comprises a hollow body 20 having an entrance opening 21, an external grip member 30 (see FIG. 1) and an internal grip member 39 (see FIG. 3) spaced apart along a longitudinal axis of the body 20, both grip members having a V-shape, and a biased restraint member 50 also having a V-shape and adapted to move towards the grip members 30, 39 when released to engage an extremity 12 (see FIG. 13) of an animal inserted through the entrance opening 21. Two interchangeable trigger assemblies 60 (see FIG. 1), 80 (see FIG. 7) are each adapted to restrain the restraint member 50 until proper engagement with a respective trigger member 61 (see FIG. 1), 81 (see FIG. 7). The first trigger assembly 60 releases the restraint member 50 via a first directional force or an opposite second directional force applied to a first trigger member 61. The second trigger assembly 80 releases the restraint member 50 via only the first directional force applied to a second trigger member 81. A ground stake 100 having jagged teeth 101 and a swivel chain 103 may be used for anchoring the animal trap 10.

The animal trap 10 is generally a foot-trapping structure and may be oriented vertically, horizontally, or at various other angles suitable to the adjacent terrain and the particular animal being trapped. The animal trap 10 is generally comprised of a metal material for strength and durability and may have various properties thereon to reduce, prevent, or eliminate rust, scent, and other elements damaging to the animal trap 10 and undesirable for trapping animals. The animal trap 10 may be manufactured in various sizes to trap various types of animals.

B. Hollow Body.

The animal trap 10 includes a hollow body 20 generally comprised of a square-tubular shape for positioning bait within, wherein the animal extends an extremity 12, such as a foot, within the entrance opening 21 (see FIG. 3) of the hollow body 20 to retrieve the bait, wherein the restraint member 50 retains their extremity 12 within the hollow body 20. The diameter of the body 20 is preferably small enough to prevent a dog or other household pet from being able to reach within the body 20 through the entrance opening 21, but is large enough to allow a raccoon or other desired trappable animal to reach within the body 20 through the entrance opening 21.

The body 20 is elongated in structure so the bait may be distally spaced from the entrance opening 21 to allow room for the trigger member 61 or 81 between the entrance opening 21 and the bait. The first longitudinal end of the body 20 includes the entrance opening 21 and the second longitudinal end of the body 20 is closed by a base plate 22.

The body 20 includes at least one lower opening 24 extending through a longitudinal corner of the body 20 for the trigger member to extend within the body 20. The base plate 22 may also have a drain 23 (see FIG. 3), such as at the point that the chain 103 connects.

The lower opening 24 and thus trigger member 61 are located between the plate 22 and the opening 21, and the lower opening 24 is elongated to allow for the trigger member 61 or 81 to pivot within the body 20. The lower opening 24 is also large enough to allow for easy cleaning and resetting of the animal trap 10.

C. External Grip Member.

Extending from the first longitudinal end of the body 20, along a longitudinal axis of the body 20 and preferably integral with a portion of the peripheral edge of the body 20, is the external grip member 30. The external grip member 30 is generally V-shaped and thus extends from two of the four sides of the body 20. The external grip member 30 extends forwardly from the first longitudinal end thus spacing the forward end of the external grip member 30 from the entrance opening 21 of the body 20.

The external grip member 30 may also have a brim surrounding a peripheral edge, thus forming a recess 31 (see FIG. 3) to allow the restraint member 50 to move further across the entrance opening 21 and better prevent animals from being able to remove their extremity 12 from the animal trap 10 once the restraint member 50 has been released. The external grip member 30 also includes a pair of elongated slots 33 (see FIG. 3) extending therethrough along each side of the V-shaped grip member 30 for receiving the restraint member 50. The slots 33 are preferably separated to prevent the restraint member 50 from being removed from the external grip member 30.

Extending outwardly from the apex of the V-shaped external grip member 30 is a support 35. The support 35 is for retaining the latch dogs and generally includes a first notch 36 and a second notch 37. The first notch 36 and the second notch 37 form a T-shape with the first notch 36 extending across the support 35 and the second notch 37 extending parallel to a length of the support 35. It is appreciated that the support 35, external grip member 30, and hollow body 20 may be comprised of an integral one-piece structure or multiple components attached together.

D. Internal Grip Member.

The internal grip member 39 is generally located adjacent the entrance opening 21 and extends slightly inwardly from a peripheral edge of the body 20 along the first longitudinal end. The internal grip member 39 is V-shaped and parallels the external grip member 30. The internal grip member 39 preferably extends inwardly past the recess 31 to a point aligned with the forward edge of the external grip member 30. The slots 33 of the external grip member 30 are positioned between the forward edge of the external grip member 30 and the internal grip member 39 as shown in FIG. 13.

E. Spring Assembly.

Along with closing the end of the body 20, the base plate 22 extends outwardly from the body 20. Preferably two supports 27 extend from the outward portion of the base plate 22. Laterally extending across a lower end of the supports 27 is a lower pivot 44 and extending across an upper end of the supports 27 is an upper pivot 45. A double-legged torsion spring 40 is wound around the lower pivot 44 and includes a pair of spaced apart extension legs 41, each extension leg 41 extending from an end of the torsion spring 40.

The extension legs 41 extend along the longitudinal length of the body 20 to a point past the slots 33 of the external grip member 30. A cross member 42 connects the extension legs 41 at a distal end. The cross member 42, extension legs 41, and spring 40 are preferably integrally formed so that a bias force from the spring 40 may be transferred to the extension legs 41 and cross member 42 for being applied to the restraint member 50.

F. Restraint Member.

The restraint member 50 is connected to the distal end of the extension legs 41 or cross member 42 and extends laterally therefrom through the slots 33 of the external grip member 30. The spring 40 imparts a bias force upon the restraint member 50 to pull the restraint member 50 outwardly towards

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the external grip member 30 to restrain the extremity 12 of the animal between the restraint member 50 and the grip members 30, 39. A majority of the restraint member 50 is exposed thus allowing for easy cleaning and resetting of the animal trap 10.

The restraint member 50 is generally comprised of a wire structure and includes a restraining portion 51, extension legs 52 extending from opposing ends of the restraining portion 51, and hook portions 53 located at the end of the extension legs 52. The restraining portion 51 is generally comprised of a V-shaped structure and is oriented opposite the grip members 30, 39 so that the restraining portion 51 forms a square cross-sectional shape with the grip members 30, 39 to engage the extremity 12 of the animal on all four sides of the extremity 12. The extension legs 52 movably extend through the slots 33 of the external grip member 30 towards the respective extension leg 41 of the spring 40. At the end of the extension legs 52 of the restraint member 50 is the hook portion 53 to secure the restraint member 50 to the extension legs 41 or cross member 42 of the spring 40.

G. First Trigger Assembly.

As illustrated in FIGS. 1-6, the first trigger assembly 60 releases the 30 restraint member 50 via a first directional force (i.e. pulling towards entrance opening 21) or an opposite second directional force (i.e. pushing towards base plate 22) applied to a first trigger member 61. The first trigger assembly 60 generally includes the first trigger member 61 and a first latch dog 70, wherein the first trigger member 61 is releasable from the first latch dog 70 and the first latch dog 70 is pivotal connected to the first notch 36 of the support 35 of the external grip member 30 via hook portion 71 extending from a retaining shaft 72 of the first latch dog 70.

The first trigger member 61 includes a trigger end 62 internal to the hollow body 20 and a connector end 63 external to the hollow body 20, wherein the first trigger member 61 is pivotally and generally slidably connected to the upper pivot 45 between the trigger end 62 and the connector end 63 along the shaft 64 at a point external to the hollow body 20. The shaft 64 is linear and connects the trigger end 62 to the connector end 63 by extending through the lower opening 24 of the body 20.

The trigger end 62 of the first trigger member 61 is generally comprised of a ring-shape thus encompassing a substantial portion of a cross-sectional area within the hollow body 20 to prevent the animal from reaching around the trigger end 62 of the first trigger member 61 when attempting to access the bait.

The connector end 63 preferably includes a notch 65 formed therein and spaced slightly inwardly. The notch 65 is used to interlock with a notch 74 of the first latch dog 70 to retain the first trigger member 61 in a safety position and thus prevent the first latch dog 70 from releasing the restraint member 50. A tab 66 is formed at the distal end of the first trigger member 61. Along with engaging the first latch dog 70 in the safety position to retain the notches 65, 74 interlocked, the tab 66 is used to rest upon a distal tab 75 of the first latch dog 70 when in the armed position.

The first trigger member 61 is slid along the upper pivot 45 from the safety position to the armed position. In the safety position, the first trigger member 61 is slid towards the first latch dog 70 so the notches 65, 74 may interlock. In the armed position, the first trigger member 61 is slid away from the first latch dog 70 so the tab 66 of the first trigger member 61 rests upon the tab 75 of the first latch dog 70 and the tab 66 of the first trigger member 61 is able to pass through the notch 74 of the first latch dog 70 when the trigger end 62 of the first trigger member 61 is pushed towards the base plate 22. The trigger

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end 62 of the first trigger member 61 may also be pulled towards the entrance opening 21 to release the restraint member 50, wherein the tab 66 moves outward past an outer end of the first latch dog 70.

H. Second Trigger Assembly.

As shown in FIGS. 9 and 10, the second trigger assembly 80 allows for easy setting of the trap 10 using a heavy latch dog 90 and gravitational force, thus the second latch dog 90 being heavier than the second trigger member 81 to pull or pivot the trigger member 81 as the second latch dog 90 falls downward over the cross member 42. When the second trigger assembly 80 is desired to be armed, the spring 40 is armed by pushing the cross member 42 towards the body 20 and tilting the opening down toward the ground allowing the heavier latch dog 90 to fall forward over the cross member 42 so the cross member 42 is positioned within the notch 93 of the of the second latch dog 90 and the cross member 42 is retained in position by the second extension 92 while the first extension 91 is extended within the second notch 37 of the support 35 to retain the second latch dog 90 in position when pressure is released from the spring 40 as illustrated in FIGS. 10 and 11. Thus, the latch dog 90 allows for easy setting of the trap 10 by simply pushing the spring 40 toward the body 20 and pivoting the body 20 so the latch dog 90 pivots into a set position to retain the spring 40 in the armed position.

As illustrated in FIGS. 7-12, the second trigger assembly 80 releases the restraint member 50 via only a first directional force (i.e. pulling towards entrance opening 21) applied to a second trigger member 81. The second trigger assembly 80 generally includes a second trigger member 81 and a second latch dog 90, wherein the second trigger member 81 is releasable from the second notch 37 of the support 35 of the external grip member 30 and is pivotally connected to the connector end 83 of the second trigger member 81. The extensions 91, 92 extend from a shaft 95 of the second latch dog 90 that extends toward an opposing pivotally connected end of the second latch dog 90.

The second trigger member 81 includes a trigger end 82 internal to the hollow body 20 and a connector end 83 external to the hollow body 20, wherein the second trigger member 81 is pivotally and generally slidably connected to the upper pivot 45 between the trigger end 82 and the connector end 83 along the shaft 84 at a point external to the hollow body 20. The shaft 84 is linear and connects the trigger end 82 to the connector end 83 by extending through the lower opening 24 of the body 20.

The trigger end 82 of the second trigger member 81 is generally comprised of a ring-shape thus encompassing a substantial portion of a cross-sectional area within the hollow body 20 to prevent the animal from reaching around the trigger end 82 of the second trigger member 81 when attempting to access the bait.

The connector end 83 preferably includes a pivot outwardly from the upper pivot 45 for pivotally connecting to an end of the second latch dog 90. The opposing end of the second latch dog 90 includes a first extension 91 for being received in the second notch 37 of the support 35, a second extension 92 for holding the outer side of the cross member 42 to retain the spring 40 and restraint member 50 in the armed position and a notch 93 positioned between the first extension 91 and the second extension 92 for receiving the cross member 42. Thus, the second trigger member 81 is fixed to the second latch dog 90 and the second latch dog 90 releases from the support 35 of the external grip member 30 to engage the restraint member 50 and restrain the extremity 12 of the animal.

I. Anchoring Structure.

Various anchoring structures may be used to retain the animal trap **10** in position to prevent the trapped animal from leaving with the trap once restrained within the body **20** by the restraint member **50**. Preferably a ground support **100** extends from the base plate **22** parallel and linear with the body **20**. The ground support **100** (e.g. ground stake) is elongated and may include numerous jagged teeth **101** in series for grabbing the ground or adjacent structure. Additionally, a chain **103** preferably extends from the animal trap **10** and may be retained via a swivel **104** attached to the base plate **22**, body **20**, ground support **100**, or other components of the animal trap **10**. The distal end of the chain **103** is then secured to a fixed structure. Further, a tubular member **102** may be located along the ground support **100** and parallel a longitudinal axis of the ground support **100**. The tubular member **102** may be used for receiving a support rod that is driven into the ground for support, such as when the ground is frozen and it may be difficult to position the ground support **100** within the ground or additional support is needed.

J. Operation of Preferred Embodiment

In use, it is first determined whether the first trigger assembly **60** or the second trigger assembly **80** is desired. Generally, the first trigger assembly **60** provides the optimal method of catching the animal since the first trigger assembly **60** can be engaged via a pushing or pulling force. However, some ordinances or laws allow only a pushing or a pulling force, but not both, upon traps, and thus in these instances the second trigger assembly **80** may be used.

When using the first trigger assembly **60**, the first trigger member **61** may be retained in the safety position while preparing the adjacent area and mounting the animal trap **10**. To put the first trigger member **61** in the safety position, the first trigger member **61** is slid towards the first latch dog **70** and the notch **65** of the first trigger member **61** is interlocked with the notch **74** of the first latch dog **70** as illustrated in FIG. 1.

When the first trigger assembly **60** is desired to be armed, the first trigger member **61** is slid away from the first latch dog **70** until the tab **66** of the first trigger member **61** aligns with the tab **75** of the first latch dog **70** and may be rested thereupon as illustrated in FIG. 2. The hook portion **71** retains the first latch dog **70** on one end and the tab **66** retains the first latch dog **70** on the opposite end, thus holding the cross member **42** inwards and the restraint member **50** in the armed position. When the trigger end **62** of the first trigger member **61** is either pushed or pulled, the tab **66** of the first trigger member **61** slides from the tab **75** of the first latch dog **70**, either through the notch **74** of the first latch dog **70** or past the first latch dog **70**, thus releasing the first latch dog **70** to pivot within the first notch **36** of the support **35** and release the cross member **42** as illustrated in FIGS. 5 and 6. The bias force of the spring **40** causes the cross member **42** to rapidly move outwardly, thus pulling the restraint member **50** rapidly outwardly towards the external grip member **30** and pinching the extremity **12** of the animal between the restraining portion **51** of the restraint member **50** and the grip members **30, 39**.

When the second trigger assembly **80** is desired to be armed, the spring **40** is armed by pushing the cross member **42** towards the body **20** and tilting the opening down toward the ground allowing the heavier latch dog **90** to fall forward over the cross member **42** so the cross member **42** is positioned within the notch **93** of the of the second latch dog **90** and the cross member **42** is retained in position by the second extension **92** while the first extension **91** is extended within the second notch **37** of the support **35** to retain the second latch dog **90** in position when pressure is released from the

spring **40**. Thus, the latch dog **90** allows for easy setting of the trap **10** by simply pushing the spring **40** toward the body **20** and pivoting the body **20** so the latch dog **90** pivots into a set position to retain the spring **40** in the armed position.

When the trigger end **82** of the second trigger member **81** is pulled, the connector end **82** of the second trigger member **81** is forced downward thus pulling the second latch dog **90** downward so that the first extension **91** is removed from the second notch **37**. Simultaneously, the second extension **92** moves downward past the cross member **42** allowing the cross member **42** to be released from the notch **93** and rapidly move outwards via the biased force of the spring **40** as illustrated in FIG. 12. The cross member **42** pulls the restraint member **50** rapidly outwardly towards the external grip member **30** and pinching the extremity **12** of the animal between the restraining portion **51** of the restraint member **50** and the grip members **30, 39** as illustrated in FIG. 13.

Unless otherwise defined, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which this invention belongs. Although methods and materials similar to or equivalent to those described herein can be used in the practice or testing of the present invention, suitable methods and materials are described above. All publications, patent applications, patents, and other references mentioned herein are incorporated by reference in their entirety to the extent allowed by applicable law and regulations. In case of conflict, the present specification, including definitions, will control. The present invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from the spirit or essential attributes thereof, and it is therefore desired that the present embodiment be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive. Any headings utilized within the description are for convenience only and have no legal or limiting effect.

The invention claimed is:

1. An animal trap comprising:

- a hollow body having a first longitudinal end and a second longitudinal end, said first longitudinal end having an upper portion and a lower portion with a step being formed at the junction between said upper and lower portions, said upper portion extending beyond said lower portion, and said first longitudinal end having an entrance opening formed therein;
- said upper portion having at least one elongated slot extending therethrough;
- an external grip member extending forwardly from said upper portion and having at least one notch extending therethrough;
- said external grip member forming a brim around said upper portion of said hollow body at a first longitudinal end thereof;
- a biased restraint member extending through said at least one elongated slot in said upper portion and across said opening;
- a pivotal trigger member extending within said body between said first longitudinal end and said second longitudinal end, and,
- a latch means interconnected with said restraint member for releasing said restraint member when said trigger member is engaged.

2. The animal trap of claim 1 in which said body has a generally square cross-sectional shape.

3. The animal trap of claim 1 wherein said trigger member has a generally circular shaped end located within said body.

4. The animal trap of claim 1 further including an internal grip member extending from said first longitudinal end, said internal grip member having a V-shape.

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5. The animal trap of claim 4 wherein said internal grip member and said external grip member extend generally parallel to each other.

6. The animal trap of claim 4 wherein said restraint member is movable between said external grip member and said internal grip member.

7. The animal trap of claim 1 further including a ground support extending from said body.

8. The animal trap of claim 1 further including an anchor chain connected to said body.

9. The animal trap of claim 1 wherein said pivotal trigger member has a shaped end that encompasses a substantial cross-sectional portion of said hollow body.

10. The animal trap of claim 1 wherein said pivotal trigger member acts to release said restraint member when subjected to either a first directional force or a second directional force.

11. An animal trap, comprising:

a hollow body having a first longitudinal end and a second longitudinal end;

said first longitudinal end having an external grip member comprised of a V-shape and having at least one notch extending therethrough;

said first longitudinal end further having an internal grip member distally spaced inwardly from said external grip member, said internal grip member also being of a V-shape;

said first longitudinal end further having at least one elongated slot extending therethrough;

a biased restraint member having a restraining portion comprised of a V-shape, said restraint member adapted to move towards said external and internal grip members when released, thereby to form a generally square cross-sectional shape comprised by said V-shape external grip member and said V-shaped restraint member so as to tightly grip four sides of the extremity of an animal when the extremity is inserted into said first longitudinal end;

a pivotal trigger member extending within said body between said first longitudinal end and said second longitudinal end, and,

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a latch means interconnecting said restraint member for releasing said restraint member when said trigger is engaged.

12. An animal trap for humanely trapping animals and for preventing theft by an animal of bait placed in the trap to lure the animal to the trap, comprising:

a hollow body having an entrance opening;

a spring supported adjacent said body and a restraint member connected to said spring, said restraint member adapted to engage an extremity of the animal when the extremity is inserted into said body through said entrance opening to restrain the animal in the trap;

a trigger assembly restraining said restraint member in an armed position, said trigger assembly including a trigger member located intermediate said entrance opening and a location within the trap where bait is placed for the animal's extremity to contact said trigger member when attempting to reach the bait thereby releasing said restraint member from said armed position when either a first directional force or a second and substantially opposite directional force is applied to the trigger member of said trigger assembly; and,

wherein said trigger member has a shaped end encompassing a substantial cross-section portion of said hollow body whereby insertion of the animal's extremity into the hollow body to reach the bait causes contact of the extremity with the shaped end of the trigger member and results in capture of the animal while also preventing theft of the bait.

13. The animal trap of claim 12 wherein said trigger member end has a generally circular shape.

14. The animal trap of claim 12 wherein said trigger member end has a generally cross shape.

15. The animal trap of claim 12 wherein said trigger member has a generally square shape.

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