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SUSPENSION ENHANCING HUB AND REAR DERAILEUR ASSEMBLY

Abstract

An electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly. The decoupling hub assembly has an axle and a hub shell rotationally positioned about the axle. A controller provides automatic activation/deactivation signals to an inductor. The decoupling hub assembly has a bearing rotationally positioned about the axle and a cassette body assembly, having a plurality of teeth, rotationally positioned about the bearing. One or more pawls are provided to engage with at least some of the teeth of the cassette body assembly and a seal is used to contain the pawls within the decoupling hub assembly. A cassette body assembly is coupled with the ratchet ring and an end cap is used to prevent a contaminant from entering into the decoupling hub assembly.

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Background/Summary

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS [0001] This application is a Divisional and claims priority to and benefit of co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 18/777,043, filed on Jul. 18, 2024, entitled “SUSPENSION ENHANCING HUB AND REAR DERAILEUR ASSEMBLY” by Choltco-Devlin et al., and assigned to the assignee of the present application, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety. [0002] The application Ser. No. 18/777,043 is a Continuation and claims priority to and benefit of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/890,988, filed on Aug. 18, 2022, now U.S. Issued U.S. Pat. No. 12,071,988, entitled “SUSPENSION ENHANCING HUB AND REAR DERAILEUR ASSEMBLY” by Choltco-Devlin et al., and assigned to the assignee of the present application, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety. [0003] The application Ser. No. 17/890,988 is a Continuation and claims priority to and benefit of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/694,732, filed on Nov. 25, 2019, now U.S. Issued U.S. Pat. No. 11,428,279, entitled “SUSPENSION ENHANCING HUB AND REAR DERAILEUR ASSEMBLY” by Choltco-Devlin et al., and assigned to the assignee of the present application, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety. [0004] The application Ser. No. 16/694,732 claims priority to and benefit of the U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/771,416 filed on Nov. 26, 2018, entitled “ELECTRONIC AUTOMATICALLY DECOUPLING HUB ASSEMBLY” by Allinger et al., and assigned to the assignee of the present application, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety. [0005] The application Ser. No. 16/694,732 claims priority to and benefit of the U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/772,504 filed on Nov. 28, 2018, entitled “DISENGAGEABLE REAR DERAILEUR ASSEMBLY” by Choltco-Devlin et al., and assigned to the assignee of the present application, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety. [0006] The application Ser. No. 16/694,732 claims priority to and benefit of the U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/805,885 filed on Feb. 14, 2019, entitled “SUSPENSION ENHANCING HUB AND REAR DERAILEUR ASSEMBLY” by Allinger et al., and assigned to the assignee of the present application, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0007] Embodiments of the invention generally relate to a suspension enhancing hub and rear derailleur assembly for a bicycle.

BACKGROUND

[0008] Rear suspension assemblies are often utilized on bicycles to absorb energy imparted to the

rear wheel by the terrain over which the bicycle is being ridden. The use of a rear suspension shock system allows a rider to traverse rougher terrain, at a greater speed and with less fatigue in comparison to riding a bicycle equipped with a rigid rear frame. However, due to the fact that the rear suspension can articulate, the distance between the center chain sprocket and the rear wheel sprocket can change causing changes in chain tightness. Such, suspension induced chain growth can have detrimental suspension performance impact and can provide deleterious feedback to a rider through the pedals, etc.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] Aspects of the present invention are illustrated by way of example, and not by way of limitation, in the accompanying drawings, wherein:

[0010] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a bicycle having a rear suspension setup, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0011] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the bicycle having a suspended rear swing arm portion as it traverses across terrain, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0012] FIG. 3A is a side view of the suspended rear swing arm portion of the bicycle as it traverses across flat terrain, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0013] FIG. 3B is a side view of the suspended rear swing arm portion of the bicycle as it traverses across a terrain feature causing a suspension event that modifies the chain stay length, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0014] FIG. 4A is a side view of the suspended rear swing arm portion of the bicycle as it traverses across a terrain feature having a suspension event that modifies the chain stay length, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0015] FIG. 4B is a side view of the suspended rear swing arm portion of the bicycle as it returns to flat terrain after the terrain feature suspension event, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0016] FIG. 5A is a perspective view of a disengageable derailleur assembly, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0017] FIG. 5B is another perspective view of a disengageable derailleur assembly, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0018] FIG. 6 is an exploded view of a disengageable derailleur assembly, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0019] FIG. 7 is a cutaway view of P-Knuckle assembly of the disengageable derailleur assembly which includes a portion of cage assembly, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0020] FIG. 8 is a side sectional view of the P-Knuckle assembly of the disengageable derailleur assembly which also includes a portion of cage assembly in a cage free configuration, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0021] FIG. 9 is a side sectional view of the P-Knuckle assembly of the disengageable derailleur assembly which also includes a portion of cage assembly in a cage sprung configuration, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0022] FIG. 10 is an exploded view of an electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0023] FIG. 11 is a partially exploded view of an electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0024] FIG. 12 is a full section view of an electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0025] FIG. 13 is an opaque front view of an electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0026] The drawings referred to in this description should be understood as not being drawn to scale except if specifically noted.

SUMMARY

[0027] A derailleur having a cage assembly and a P-Knuckle assembly, wherein the cage assembly is selectively and frictionally engaged or disengaged from the P-Knuckle assembly. In addition, the derailleur allows the P-Knuckle assembly to retain orientation information with respect to the cage assembly during the frictional disengagement such that the derailleur will maintain the suspension position, gearing, and chain drift needs of the bicycle while allowing free movement of the cage assembly to eliminate most cage force that could adversely affect suspension performance.

[0028] The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly wherein a number of the one or more pawls is analogous to the number of inductor/electromagnets.

[0029] The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly wherein the controller provides a polarity to the inductors/electromagnets that push or pull the one or more pawls into an engaged position.

[0030] The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly wherein the controller provides a polarity to the inductors/electromagnets that push or pull the one or more pawls into a disengaged position.

[0031] The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly wherein an electromagnetic force is used to engage the pawls with cassette body assembly when the pawls are retracted in a resting state.

[0032] The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly wherein an electromagnetic force is used to disengage the pawls with cassette body assembly when the pawls are deployed in a resting state.

[0033] The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly further comprising: at least one sensor to provide an input signal to the controller, the input signal causing the controller to electronic automatically engage or disengage the pawls from the cassette body assembly.

[0034] The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly wherein the sensor is selected one or more of the group of sensors consisting of: an accelerometer, an optical detection (e.g., infrared motion sensor), an image capturing device (e.g., optical flow), and a combination thereof.

DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

[0035] The detailed description set forth below in connection with the appended drawings is intended as a description of various embodiments of the present invention and is not intended to represent the only embodiments in which the present invention is to be practiced. Each embodiment described in this disclosure is provided merely as an example or illustration of the present invention, and should not necessarily be construed as preferred or advantageous over other embodiments. In some instances, well known methods, procedures, and objects have not been described in detail as not to unnecessarily obscure aspects of the present disclosure.

Definitions

[0036] In the following discussion, the disengageable derailleur assembly includes a P-Knuckle (Pully Knuckle) assembly and a cage assembly frictionally and mechanically coupled together to form a derailleur such as shown in FIGS. 5A and 5B and in further detail in FIG. 6.

[0037] In the following discussion the term disengageable derailleur assembly refers to the capability to modify the coefficient of friction between the P-Knuckle assembly and the cage assembly of the derailleur assembly. In one embodiment, a clutch plate is used to modify the coefficient of friction between the two assemblies. For example, when the coefficient of friction is high (e.g., the clutch plates are engaged), the P-Knuckle assembly and the cage assembly become fixedly coupled such that movement of the cage assembly causes movement of the P-knuckle assembly and vice versa. In contrast, when the coefficient of friction is low (e.g., when the clutch plates are separated), the P-Knuckle assembly disengages from the cage assembly such that the cage assembly is capable of movement about the coupling axis with the P-Knuckle assembly in an

almost frictionless state. Therefore, when the P-Knuckle assembly and the cage assembly are frictionally disengaged, the feedback that is encountered by the suspension due to the input of the P-Knuckle assembly onto the cage assembly is significantly reduced.

[0038] The P-knuckle assembly is shown at P-Knuckle **510** of FIGS. **5A** and **5B** and further in detail in FIG. **6**. In one embodiment, P-Knuckle assembly includes a P-Knuckle housing **615**, a motor and gear **610**, a spring (or solenoid) housing **620**, a linear solenoid **625**, a torsional power spring **630**, a P-Knuckle clutch plate **635** (with gear), at least one thrust bearing **640**, and a P-Knuckle cover **644**. In one embodiment, a frame attachment portion **505** is also part of the P-Knuckle assembly **510**.

[0039] The cage assembly: is illustrated herein as the cage assembly **565** of FIGS. **5A** and **5B** and further in detail in FIG. **6**. In one embodiment, the cage assembly includes a cage bearing **645**, a cage plate **650**, at least one snap ring **655**, inner and outer cage plates **563**, lower idler pulley **520**, and upper idler pulley **520a**.

[0040] Although a plurality of different components is described, it should be appreciated that the disengageable derailleur assembly **17** can have more of fewer components. For example, a number of the components shown could be combined to a single component or could be broken from one into a plurality of components. Moreover, the disengageable derailleur assembly **17** could include more of fewer of the components shown. The use of the designated separate components defined as being part of P-Knuckle assembly **510** and cage assembly **565** in the discussion is provided as one embodiment, and is shown merely for purposes of clarity. It should be appreciated that in one embodiment, one or more of the components could be moved into the opposite assembly.

[0041] Chain stay length: The distance between bottom bracket (where the crank attaches to bicycle frame) and the rear wheel axis. On a rigid frame bike, unless the frame fails, the distance between the bottom bracket and the rear wheel axis will remain the same. However, on a rear suspension bicycle, unless the main suspension arm pivots directly about the bottom bracket axis, the chain stay length changes as the suspension pivots.

[0042] Pedal bob: A suspension motion caused when the rider is standing up and pedaling. As the rider reaches the bottom of the crank/pedaling circle, a dead spot is created in the pedal circle as the rider's weight momentarily comes to reset on the pedal that is at the bottom of the pedal circle and before the opposite leg can begins to pick up the rider weight on the opposite downward pedal stroke. Pedal bob wastes energy that is input into the bicycle as the suspension will absorb a portion of the energy in the form of suspension friction instead of using all of the input energy for propulsion.

[0043] Anti-squat: is a measure of how much the suspension and/or chain tension maintainer resists pedal bob.

[0044] Pedal kickback: if there are high levels of anti-squat, during times of sudden suspension compression, the suspension will not be able to absorb the compression and this will result in the crank being forced to rotate backwards due to the lengthening of the chain stay length occurring faster than the suspension and/or chain tension maintainer can increase the available operational length of chain.

[0045] In addition to improvement in pedal feedback, the disengaged freewheel mechanism will improve rear wheel traction. For example, when the hub is engaged, chain stay length increase will, along with inputting force into the rider's legs, also force the rear wheel to rotate forward. This rotation would be at a rate almost certainly different than the rate at which the wheel is moving over the ground, decreasing the wheel's ability to track terrain and decreasing traction.

[0046] However, by disengaging the hub, chain stay length increase will not deleteriously impact the rotation of the rear wheel. As such, the rotation of the rear wheel would remain the same rate at which the wheel is moving over the ground. By removing any chain stay length increasing forces subjected to the rear wheel, the wheel will be able to track terrain and maintain whatever traction is presently available.

[0047] Rear derailleur: is used in a bicycle drive train to shift the drive chain across a number of rear cogs/sprockets to achieve different gear ratios depending on riding conditions and rider preference. The small cog in a current bicycle drive train is 9-12 teeth. The large cog can be as large as 42 teeth or more. Therefore, the rear derailleur acts as both a shifting mechanism, and a chain tensioner mechanism to accommodate the different lengths of chain required when shifting from the small cog to the large cog.

[0048] Embodiment of the present invention would not be obvious and in fact, are likely counter-intuitive to those of ordinary skill in the art because those in the art knows that it is important to maintain that spring force on the cage assembly in order to maintain chain tensioning. Maintaining chain tension is important to maintain chain retention such that the chain does not bounce off of a chain ring. However, the disclosed technology selectively engages and disengages the cage assembly from the P-Knuckle, such that the tension on the chain is relieved (due to the disengagement) when the chain growth is increasing. Moreover, (due to the re-engagement characteristics of the cage assembly with the P-Knuckle) tension is maintained when the chain growth is reduced or is no longer increasing.

Overview

[0049] In general, there are a number of difference rear suspension systems such as simple single-pivot, linkage-driven single pivot, Horst-link (four-bar), Twin-link (virtual pivot point), and the like. Further, the location of the pivot can be higher or lower on frame **24**.

[0050] The use of a rear suspension shock system allows a rider to traverse rougher terrain, at a greater speed and with less fatigue in comparison to riding a bicycle equipped with a rigid rear frame. However, due to the fact that throughout a rear suspension articulation the distance between the center chain sprocket and the rear wheel sprocket can change, the accompanying chain growth can detrimentally affect the operation and feel of the rear suspension during compression and rebound.

[0051] Bikes utilized chain growth to affect certain suspension characteristics. In general, the chain growth is taken up by derailleurs to control the length of the chain deployed. However, when the derailleur is sprung it can detrimentally affect the suspension by adding additional forces to the suspension and therefore restrict the motion of the suspension.

[0052] Embodiments discussed herein provide a new and novel way to selectively and frictionally engage or disengage the cage assembly from the P-Knuckle assembly (e.g., the clutch plate from the P-Knuckle assembly frictionally engages or disengages with its cage assembly counterpart) and the freewheel mechanism of a hub from the suspension selectively, such as based on terrain, rider input, and the like. In so doing, and based on manual or automatic inputs from the bicycle system, the disengageable derailleur assembly can be disengaged when performance is paramount to eliminate the inefficiencies caused by suspension induced chain growth. Further, the disengageable derailleur assembly can be reengaged as needed to ensure the chain stays in an appropriate location to properly propel the bicycle. The inputs could be pedal movement, suspension movement, pitch of the bicycle, inputs from one or more sensors, chain tautness, and the like.

Operation

[0053] FIG. **1** illustrates bicycle **100** having a frame **24** with a suspension system comprising a swing arm portion **26** that, in use, is able to move relative to the rest of frame **24**; this movement is permitted by, inter alia, a rear shock absorber and/or damping assembly **38**. The front forks **34** also provide a suspension function via a damping assembly in at least one fork leg; as such the bicycle **100** is a full suspension bicycle (such as an ATB or mountain bike), although the embodiments described herein are not limited to use on full suspension bicycles. In particular, the term “suspension system” is intended to include vehicles having front suspension or rear suspension only, or both. In one embodiment, swing arm portion **26** is pivotally attached to the main frame **24** at pivot point **12** which is located above the bottom bracket axis **11**. Although pivot point **12** is shown in a specific location, it should be appreciated that pivot point **12** can be found at different

distances from bottom bracket axis **11** depending upon the rear suspension configuration. The use of the specific pivot point **12** herein is provided merely for purposes of clarity. Bottom bracket axis **11** is the center of the pedal and front sprocket assembly **13**. Bicycle **100** includes a front wheel **28** which is coupled to the main frame **24** via front fork **34** and a rear wheel **30** which is coupled to the main frame **24** via swing arm portion **26**. A seat **32** is connected to the main frame **24** in order to support a rider of the bicycle **20**.

[0054] The front wheel **28** is supported by a front fork **34** which, in turn, is secured to the main frame **24** by a handlebar assembly **36**. The rear wheel **30** is connected to the swing arm portion **26** of the frame **22** at rear axle **15**. A shock absorber (e.g., damper assembly **38**) is positioned between the swing arm portion **26** and the frame **22** to provide resistance to the pivoting motion of the swing arm portion **26** about pivot point **12**. Thus, the illustrated bicycle **100** includes a suspension member between swing arm portion **26** and the frame **24** which operate to substantially reduce rear wheel **30** impact forces from being transmitted to the rider of the bicycle **100**.

[0055] Bicycle **100** is driven by a chain **19** that is coupled with both front sprocket assembly **13** and rear sprocket **18**. As the rider pedals the front sprocket assembly **13** is rotated about bottom bracket axis **11** a force is applied to chain **19** which transfers the energy to rear sprocket **18**. Optional chain tension device provides a variable amount of tension on chain **19**. The need for chain **19** length variation can be due to a number of different gears that may be on one or both of front sprocket assembly **13** and/or rear sprocket **18** and/or changes in chain stay length as the distance between bottom bracket axis **11** (where front sprocket assembly **13** attaches to bicycle frame **24**) and the rear axle **15** changes due to suspension articulation as shown in further detail in herein.

[0056] FIG. 2 illustrates bicycle **100** having a suspended rear swing arm portion **26** as it traverses across terrain **45** and encounters a terrain feature **55** shown in accordance with an embodiment. Terrain feature **55** may be a dip, rock, bump, sidewalk, hole, or any other type of feature that will cause an articulation in the rear suspension of bicycle **100**. In general, terrain feature **55** will exert a force on rear wheel **30** of the bicycle **100**. The angle of the resolved force relative to the rear wheel **30** is typically normal (substantially) to the rear wheel **30** at the point of impact. That force then imparts a component of the impact from terrain feature **55** to the axle **15** as dictated by the trajectory of the swing arm pivot point **12**.

[0057] Although one type of rear suspension is shown herein it is for purposes of clarity. It should be appreciated that there may be many different ways of setting up a rear suspension. However, the following discussion is applicable to any rear suspension setup that has a swing arm pivot point **12** that is not located exactly at bottom bracket axis **11**. That is, since the swing arm pivot point **12** is offset from the bottom bracket axis **11** (above, below, ahead, or behind) then when rear swing arm portion **26** rotates the chain stay length changes.

[0058] FIG. 3A is a side view **300** of the suspended rear swing arm portion **26** of the bicycle as it traverses across flat terrain **45** shown in accordance with an embodiment.

[0059] FIG. 3B is a side view **350** of the suspended rear swing arm portion **26** of the bicycle as it traverses across a terrain feature **55** causing a suspension event that modifies the chain stay length shown in accordance with an embodiment.

[0060] For example, the main pivot point **12** for bicycle **100** is slightly behind and higher than the bottom bracket axis **11**. However, it could also include a couple of linkages and a number of different articulations. As such, 10 inches of rear travel **305** is not uncommon in a rear suspension bike. However, since the rear can travel throughout the 10-inch range, the chain stay length will change. For example, from the shortest distance when the bike is sitting to a longer distance when there is weight on the suspension, e.g., a rider on the bike, when bumps are hit, when pedal bob occurs, etc.

[0061] As chain length grows, e.g., due to a suspension change, the rider pedaling the bike will feel the motion of the suspension causing a change in the pressure on the pedal. During a high or quick

levels of suspension movement (e.g., hitting a large rock, tree branch, pothole, and the like), the brisk change in suspension configuration and chain stay length will provide a significant pedal pressure change which could cause a rider to lose balance and possibly even crash. Moreover, the equally quick return of the suspension to the normal state after the bump is encountered could cause the chain to come free of the front or rear sprockets.

[0062] FIG. 4A is a side view **400** of the suspended rear swing arm portion **26** of the bicycle as it traverses across a terrain feature **55** having a suspension event that modifies the chain stay length shown in accordance with an embodiment.

[0063] FIG. 4B is a side view of the suspended rear swing arm portion of the bicycle as it returns to flat terrain **45** after the terrain feature **55** suspension event shown in accordance with an embodiment. The rear derailleur assembly **17**, using one or more spring, provides tension in the chain **19** for gear changing and suspension change events. However, in a large suspension change event such as after contacting terrain feature **55** (e.g., hitting a bump causing a quick suspension articulation change), the spring pressure within the rear derailleur is not always able to keep up with the change in chain stay length. In one case, the quick change in chain stay length as the suspension travels back from B to A over rear travel **305** will result in a relaxing in the pressure on the chain **19** which will travel along chain **19** to the front sprocket assembly **13** and cause the chain **19** to disengage from the front sprocket assembly **13**.

[0064] One solution utilizes a friction clutch in the rear derailleur assembly **17** to reduce the release in chain pressure, thereby stopping chain **19** from getting enough slack to disengage from the front sprocket assembly **13**. However, the use of the clutch restricts chain stay length growth. For example, as shown in FIGS. 3A and 3B when bicycle **100** encounters terrain feature **55** and initially distance of rear travel **305** from A to B, the necessary amount of chain will have to increase as the chain stay length increases to keep up with the suspension articulation. However, if there is a clutch restricting the chain stay length growth, the encounter with terrain feature **55** will cause the suspension to put excessive force on chain **19** during the suspension articulation, the excessive force can cause chain damage, sprocket damage, or reduce the suspension travel length providing a harsher ride over the terrain feature.

[0065] FIGS. 4A and 4B also include a sensor **415**, such as an accelerometer, an optical detection (e.g., infrared motion sensor), an image capturing device (e.g., optical flow), a combination thereof, or the like. In one embodiment, sensor **415** detects the amount of rotation and speed of rotation of the rear axle. In another embodiment, sensor **415** can determine the angle of swing arm portion **26**. For example, is the swing arm portion **26** tilted in a manner that would suggest the bicycle **100** is going down a small incline (5-15 degrees), down a medium incline (16-30 degrees), down a large incline (31-90 degrees), traversing a flat section, going up a small incline (5-15 degrees), going up a medium incline (16-30 degrees), going up a large incline (31-90 degrees), etc. Although a number of degrees are provided to indicate three different levels of slope, it should be appreciated that there may be more of fewer different breakdowns of slope measurement. For example, in the simplest case it could be whether it is a downward slope (descending) or an inclined slope (ascending). In a more complicated example, there could be different levels for every 5 degrees, 7 degrees, 10 degrees, 15 degrees, or the like). In one embodiment, sensor **415** could determine whether or not the chain is being rotated based on whether the pedals are moving or are stationary, etc.

[0066] Sensor **415** may be positioned proximate a rear axle **15** of the bicycle **100** for sensing changes in terrain. As shown in FIGS. 4A and 4B, sensor **415** is mounted on swing arm portion **26** proximate the rear axle **15** of the bicycle. In one embodiment the angular orientation of a sensor **415** sensing axis is movable through a range or angle thereby allowing alteration of a force component sensed by sensor **415** in relation to a force (vector) input into the rear swing arm portion **26**. It is understood that sensor **415** may be moved or mounted in any suitable configuration and allowing for any suitable range of adjustment as may be desirable. It is understood that the sensor may include one, two, three or more sensing axis'. That is useful for adjusting the sensitivity of

sensor **415** to various anticipated terrain and bicycle speed conditions. The bicycle speed affects the vector direction of a force input to the bicycle wheel for constant amplitude terrain feature **55** or “bump/dip.” Varying size bumps and dips also affect the vector input angle to the wheel for constant bicycle speed. The movement of swing arm portion **26** is however limited to a mechanically determined trajectory. In one embodiment, sensor **415** may be coupled to the rear suspension, such as shock absorber and/or damper assembly **38**, for measuring the operational characteristics of the rear suspension.

[0067] Sensor **415** can be any suitable force or acceleration transducer (e.g. strain gage, Wheatstone bridge, accelerometer, hydraulic cylinder, interferometer based, optical, thermal, and acoustic or any suitable combination thereof). Sensor **415** may utilize solid state electronics, electro-mechanical principles, or any other suitable mechanisms. In one embodiment, sensor **415** is a single axis self-powered accelerometer, such as for example ENDEVCO Model 2229C. The 2229C is a comparatively small device with overall dimensions of about 15 mm height by 10 mm diameter, and weighs about 4.9 g. Its power is self-generated and therefore the total power requirements for the bicycle **100** are reduced; this is an important advantage, at least for some types of bicycle, where overall weight is a concern. In one embodiment, the single axis accelerometer comprises the ENDEVCO 12MIA, which is of the surface-mount type. The 12MIA is a single axis accelerometer comprising a bimorph sensing element which operates in the bender mode. This accelerometer is particularly small and light, measuring about 4.5 mm by 3.8 mm by 0.85 mm, and weighs about 0.12 g. In other embodiments, sensor **415** is a tri-axial accelerometer such as the ENDEVCO 67-100. This device has overall dimensions of about 23 mm length and 15 mm width, and weighs about 14 g. Other sensors known in the art may be used with the embodiments described herein.

[0068] In one embodiment, sensor **415** is attached to swing arm portion **26** directly, to any link thereof, to an intermediate mounting member or to any other portion or portions of the bicycle as may be useful for purposes disclosed herein. In one embodiment sensor **415** is fixed to an unsprung portion of the bicycle **100**, such as for example swing arm portion **26**, and another sensor **415** (such as an accelerometer as described above) is fixed to a sprung portion of the bicycle, such as for example the frame **24** of FIG. **1** or **2**. Data from each sensor can, by a processor, be overlaid on a common time datum and suspension damping and/or spring effectiveness can be evaluated by comparing the data from the sensors on either “side” of the suspension unit. Sensors may be integrated with the vehicle structure and data processing system as described in U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,863,291; 4,773,671; 4,984,819; 5,390,949; 5,105,918; 6,427,812; 6,244,398; 5,027,303; and 6,935,157. Sensors and valve actuators (e.g. electric solenoid or linear motor type) note that a rotary motor may also be used with a rotary actuated valve) may be integrated herein utilizing principles outlined in SP-861-Vehicle Dynamics and Electronic Controlled Suspensions SAE Technical Paper Series no. 910661 by Shiozaki et al. for the International Congress and Exposition, Detroit, Michigan, Feb. 25-Mar. 1, 1991.

[0069] In operation, sensor **415** puts out a voltage change corresponding to an input force. For example, the outputs from one or more sensor **415** are reconciled in a controller or processor, such as a microprocessor, having an algorithm for weighting their respective inputs and generating a resulting singular command or signal based on a predetermined logic. In one embodiment, sensor **415** senses an input force along the prescribed range or axis. A terrain feature **55** (e.g., bump) in the terrain **45** typically exerts a force on a rear wheel **30** of the bicycle **100** (as shown in FIGS. **4A** and **4B**). The angle of the resolved force from terrain feature **55** relative to the rear wheel **30** is typically normal (substantially) to the rear wheel **30** at the point of impact. That force then imparts a component of the impact of terrain feature **55** to the axle **15** as dictated by the trajectory of the swing arm portion **26**. That component can be sensed by sensor **415** at a magnitude corresponding to the orientation of the sensor range or angle. The sensor axis orientation can be adjusted to make sensor **415** more or less sensitive to bumps and dips in the terrain.

[0070] With reference now to FIGS. 5A and 5B and to FIG. 1, two different perspective views of a disengageable derailleur assembly **17** are shown in accordance with an embodiment. In general, disengageable derailleur assembly **17** has a linkage mechanism attempting to position the rear derailleur to the left from the perspective of a rider on bicycle **100**. A cable attached to a shifter on the handlebar assembly **36**, or hydraulic actuator connected to a shifter designed actuate the hydraulic actuator, or an electronic positioning motor connected to a shifter switch and controller, positions derailleur assembly **17** into the correct position for the corresponding cog the rider is trying to choose. Disengageable derailleur assembly **17** includes a frame attachment portion **505**, a P-Knuckle assembly **510**, a cage assembly **565** (which includes inner and outer cage plates **563**, lower idler pulley **520**, and upper idler pulley **520a**). In one embodiment, frame attachment portion **505** is coupled with swing arm portion **26**. In one embodiment, frame attachment portion **505** is part of the P-Knuckle assembly **510**.

[0071] Lower idle pulley **520** (and similarly upper idle pulley **520a**) includes a cog having a plurality of teeth on an outer perimeter thereof, the cog provides continuous rotating contact with chain **19** of bicycle **100**. In one embodiment, lower idle pulley **520** is horizontally adjustable across a number of rear sprocket **18** coupled with rear wheel **30** of bicycle **100**. In one embodiment, disengageable derailleur assembly **17** has an upper idle pulley **520a** proximal to the joint where P-Knuckle assembly **510** is located.

[0072] FIG. 6 is an exploded view of disengageable derailleur assembly **17** shown in accordance with an embodiment. In one embodiment, disengageable derailleur assembly **17** includes P-Knuckle assembly **510** and cage assembly **565**.

[0073] In one embodiment, P-Knuckle assembly **510** includes a P-Knuckle housing **615**, a motor and gear **610**, a spring (or solenoid) housing **620**, a linear solenoid **625**, a torsional power spring **630**, a P-Knuckle clutch plate **635** (with gear), at least one thrust bearing **640**, and a P-Knuckle cover **644**.

[0074] In one embodiment, cage assembly **565** includes a cage bearing **645**, a cage plate **650**, at least one snap ring **655**, inner and outer cage plates **563**, lower idler pulley **520**, and upper idler pulley **520a**.

[0075] In one embodiment, during the disengagement process, cage plate **650** will decouple the cage assembly **565** from the P-Knuckle assembly **510** though the axial movement of the P-Knuckle clutch plate **635**. Thus, for a given gear selection only the cage assembly **565** would move relative to the bicycle frame, while the P-Knuckle assembly **510** would be disengaged during a chain growth or reduction event.

[0076] Although a plurality of different components is shown and described, it should be appreciated that disengageable derailleur assembly **17** can have more of fewer components. For example, a number of the components shown could be combined to a single component or could be broken from one into a plurality of components. Moreover, disengageable derailleur assembly **17** could include more of fewer of the components shown. The use of the designated separate components defined as being part of P-Knuckle assembly **510** and cage assembly **565** in the discussion is provided as one embodiment, and is shown merely for purposes of clarity. It should be appreciated that in one embodiment, one or more of the components could be moved into the opposite assembly.

[0077] Referring now to FIG. 7, a cutaway view A-A of P-Knuckle assembly **510** of the disengageable derailleur assembly **17** which includes a portion of cage assembly **565** is shown in accordance with an embodiment. The operation of the P-Knuckle assembly **510** as seen in the sectional view A-A is shown in two different orientations in FIGS. 8 and 9 and is described in the discussion thereof.

[0078] With reference now to FIG. 8, a side sectional view A-A of the P-Knuckle assembly **510** of the disengageable derailleur assembly **17** which also includes a portion of cage assembly **565** is shown in accordance with an embodiment. In FIG. 8, a cage free configuration is shown in

accordance with an embodiment. In one embodiment, the cage free configuration shows a left force **805**, a gear interface **810**, motor and gear **610**, a clearance **825**, a frictional interface **830**, a locking **806** of linear solenoid **625**, a locking **816** of motor and gear **610**, a cage rotation axis **820**, and mechanical connections **840**.

[0079] In FIG. **8**, cage assembly **565** rotates freely about the axis indicated by cage plate rotation **820**. During disengagement, one embodiment will frictionally decouple the cage assembly **565** from the P-Knuckle assembly **510** though the axial movement of the P-Knuckle clutch plate **635** via torsional power spring **630**. In one embodiment, during the disengagement, a controller (that is, in one embodiment, part of linear solenoid **625**) senses and stores position of P-Knuckle assembly **510** with respect to cage assembly **565** at disengagement to ensure a proper orientation during a later re-engagement.

[0080] Referring now to FIG. **9**, a side sectional view A-A of the P-Knuckle assembly **510** of the disengageable derailleur assembly **17** which also includes a portion of cage assembly **565** is shown in accordance with an embodiment. In FIG. **9**, a cage sprung configuration is shown in accordance with an embodiment. In one embodiment, the cage sprung configuration shows a right force **905**, gear interface **810**, motor and gear **610**, clearance **825**, frictional interface **830**, the unlocking **916** of motor and gear **610**, free cage rotation **820**, and mechanical connections **840**.

[0081] In FIG. **9**, cage assembly **565** rotate about the axis indicated by cage rotation **820** under a spring force. During re-engagement one embodiment will frictionally couple the cage assembly **565** to the P-Knuckle assembly **510** using torsional power spring **630** through movement of P-Knuckle clutch plate **635**. In one embodiment, motor and gear **610** engages to restore timing of cage assembly **565** and torsional power spring **630** using clutch plate **635**. In addition to the difference in the force direction, in the cage sprung configuration, the friction interface **830** and clearance **825** are switched.

[0082] In one embodiment, in order to compensate for the engagement and disengagement, disengageable derailleur assembly **17** will lock torsional power spring **630** to itself once cage assembly **565** is frictionally disengaged from P-Knuckle assembly **510** to keep the appropriate preload. In one embodiment, the appropriate preload maintenance is implemented through linear solenoid **625** and opposing frictional clutch-type (in a traditional, auto-sense) clutch plate **635**. For example, once cage assembly **565** is frictionally disengaged from P-Knuckle assembly **510** by disengaging cage assembly **565** from torsional power spring **630**, the timing of both the cage assembly **565** and the torsional power spring **630** would need to be kept synchronized for reengagement so that torsional power spring **630** will have the same force on it once P-Knuckle assembly **510** is reengaged with cage assembly **565**. If the timing is not maintained there is a risk of torsional power spring **630** winding all the way up or all the way down and giving cage assembly **565** either nowhere to move, or no actual spring force, respectively. In one embodiment, the maintenance of the orientation of cage assembly **565** with the appropriate force on torsional power spring **630** is maintained by simultaneously disengaging torsional power spring **630** from cage assembly **565** and engaging torsional power spring **630** with something else in P-Knuckle assembly **510** such as P-Knuckle **615** housing (or the like) to keep the proper preload on torsional power spring **630** and vice versa for the reengagement of cage assembly **565** with P-Knuckle assembly **510**.

[0083] For example, the bicycle is approaching a series of logs and the rear suspension is going to be working. Over the first log, cage assembly **565** frictionally disengages from P-Knuckle assembly **510** and the rear suspension is compressed to 25 degrees. While the suspension is compressed 25 degrees, the rider begins to pedal which causes cage assembly **565** to frictionally reengage with P-Knuckle assembly **510** at 15 degrees. If this continued for each log, and without any type of error correction, at some point torsional power spring **630** would be either packed or unpacked.

[0084] In order to overcome this issue, in one embodiment, the frictional reengaging of torsional

power spring **630** with cage assembly **565** will occur before the disengagement of P-Knuckle **615** housing with torsional power spring **630**. In so doing, there is no time during the engagement/disengagement/reengagement process that torsional power spring **630** and cage assembly **565** are not maintaining their correct orientation. Thus, the risk of torsional power spring **630** winding all the way up or down due to an improper engagement/disengagement/reengagement is removed. Moreover, this process removes the opportunity for the torsion power spring **630** to be packed or unwound due to several uncoordinated engagement/disengagement/reengagement occurrences.

[0085] In one embodiment, the sensor **415** is used to track the orientation of the suspension and the tracking information is provided to a controller for motor and gear **610** which will allow P-Knuckle assembly **510** to establish the proper timing on torsional power spring **630** prior to the frictional re-engagement of P-Knuckle assembly **510** with cage assembly **565**.

[0086] In another embodiment, wave dynamics of the chain itself can be used to manage the frictional disengagement and reengagement. For example, disengageable derailleur assembly **17** can actively, automatically, and continually adjust the position of P-Knuckle assembly **510** with respect to the position of cage assembly **565** based on suspension position and gearing such that the system will always have the correct amount of chain paid out. This would minimize chain slap and could eliminate load on the whole suspension system. In one embodiment, this is realized by using a stepper motor & controller (e.g., motor and gear **610**) which receives input from both from a gear selection and a suspension position (e.g., information from sensor **415**) to give the disengageable derailleur assembly **17** some tolerance if sampling rates of the system could not create an effective “continuous” signal. Thus, if disengageable derailleur assembly **17** is active, rather than cage assembly **565** and P-Knuckle assembly **510** being engaged or disengaged based on pedaling, cage assembly **565** and P-Knuckle assembly **510** would be frictionally disengaged for compressions/chain growth and reengaged for rebound/chain shrink.

[0087] In one embodiment, disengageable derailleur assembly **17** remains engaged under normal chain stay length changes such as suspension articulation due to pedaling, normal suspension travel issues, and the like. However, when a significant suspension event occurs, e.g., hitting a large bump causing a large, quick articulation of the suspension, P-Knuckle assembly **510** will not provide significant damping during the chain length extension (as would occur when the suspension travels as shown from FIG. 3A to FIG. 3B). However, when the suspension returns (e.g., travels from FIG. 4A to FIG. 4B) P-Knuckle assembly **510** will increase the resistance to chain **19**, thereby stopping chain **19** from obtaining enough slack to disengage from front sprocket assembly **13** or rear sprocket **18**.

[0088] In one embodiment, the damping force is automatically controlled by a controller in response to the input from sensor **415** when the bicycle **100** is in use. Optionally, the user may be able to override and/or adjust this automatic control using a manual input. For example, when sensor **415** puts out a voltage corresponding to terrain feature **55** (e.g., a bump, a dip, etc.) that voltage is transmitted to a controller (e.g. a memory and a processor/microprocessor, or an ASIC). In one embodiment, P-Knuckle assembly **510** is responsive to signals and power transmitted from the controller or processor. As the values increase or decrease, an electromagnetic circuit is used to engage or disengage the cage assembly **565** and P-Knuckle assembly **510** which reduces the influence that the engaged P-Knuckle assembly **510** will have on the suspension articulation.

[0089] Some or all of components of embodiments herein including sensor **415**, P-Knuckle assembly **510**, and the like are interconnected or connected by wire, wireless, WAN, LAN, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, ANT (i.e. GARMIN low power usage protocol), or any suitable power or signal transmitting mechanism.

[0090] Although a plurality of different components is shown and described, it should be appreciated that disengageable derailleur assembly **17** can have more of fewer components. For example, a number of the components shown could be combined to a single component or could be

broken from one into a plurality of components. Moreover, disengageable derailleur assembly **17** could include more of fewer of the components shown. The use of the designated separate components in the discussion is provided as one embodiment, of many possible and is shown merely for purposes of clarity.

[0091] With reference now to FIG. **10**, an exploded view of an electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000** is shown in accordance with an embodiment. In FIG. **10**, electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000** includes an axle **15**, a hub shell non drive side (NDS) **1005**, a controller **1010**, one or more inductors/electromagnets **1015**, a cassette body assembly **1040** (e.g., a hub shell drive side (DS)), a bearing **1025**, one or more pawls **1030** (whose number, in one embodiment, may be analogous to the number of inductor/electromagnets **1015**), a seal **1035**, a cassette body assembly **1040**, and an end cap **1045**. In one embodiment, electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000** uses magnets in each of the pawls **1030** with an inductors/electromagnets **1015** above it and controlled by a controller **1010** inside the hub shell NDS **1005**. When not pedaling the pawls **1030** would be disengaged by the inductors/electromagnets **1015** turning on or flipping polarity to attract the pawls **1030** upwards away from the cassette body assembly **1040**. When pedaling the inductors/electromagnets **1015** would be turned off and the magnets of pawls **1030** attracted to the ferrous cassette body assembly **1040** (less energy usage). Or the polarity of the inductors/electromagnets **1015** could be flipped to repel the pawls **1030** away, forcing them toward the cassette body assembly **1040**.

[0092] Rear axle **15** is described previously herein. Hub shell NDS **1005** is the left side of the hub.

[0093] Controller **1010** provides power/or polarity to the inductor/electromagnets and could house a battery, dynamo, or generator to provide a charge to a battery or create its own power. Further operation of controller **1010** is provided below.

[0094] One or more inductors/electromagnets **1015** which receive input from controller **1010** to engage/disengage the pawls **1030** with respect to the cassette body assembly **1040**.

[0095] Cassette body assembly **1040** provides a number of teeth to receive the pawls **1030**. In general, bigger teeth and pawls will deal better with larger amounts of torque, while a finer set up provides faster engagement. Bearing **1025** is used to maintain cassette body assembly **1040** about the axle **15**.

[0096] One or more pawls **1030** are used to engage with the teeth of cassette body assembly **1040**. Although 6 pawls **1030** are shown that number is exemplary. To produce a faster pick-up in one embodiment, the pawls **1030** are offset to double the number of engagements per revolution.

[0097] Seal **1035** is used to keep dirt out while also keeping pawls **1030** from falling out or being lost when the hub is disassembled.

[0098] Cassette body assembly **1040** is used to hold the cassette cogs. In one embodiment, the cassette body assembly **1040** includes splines thereon to mechanically couple with the cassette cogs.

[0099] End cap **1045** is used to prevent dust and water from entering into electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000**.

[0100] In one embodiment, controller **1010** provides a polarity to inductors/electromagnets **1015** that push or pull pawls **1030** into an engaged position, or they are spring loaded to provide inductors/electromagnets **1015** to engage/disengage the pawls **1030**. The cassette body assembly **1040** is a ferrous material that attracts the (magnetic) pawls **1030** to the cassette body assembly **1040**, while the electromagnetic controller **1010** on the other side will provide an electromagnetic force via inductors/electromagnets **1015** that can be used to attract the magnetic pawls **1030**. In one embodiment, the electromagnetic force could be used to engage the pawls **1030** with cassette body assembly **1040** when pawls **1030** are retracted when in a resting state. In another embodiment, the electromagnetic force could be used to disengage the pawls **1030** from cassette body assembly **1040** when pawls **1030** are deployed when in a resting state.

[0101] In one embodiment, electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000** is mechanical

and the pawls **1030** are engaged or disengaged electronic automatically through a series of stepper motors, a single stepper motor with a series of linkages to drive each of the pawls **1030** simultaneously. In yet another embodiment, the engagement/disengagement of the pawls **1030** could be solenoid induced, etc. In one embodiment, pawls **1030** can be engaged and/or disengaged electronic automatically based on input from sensor **415**.

[0102] For example, the sensor **415** output can be used by a processor in electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000**. Moreover, the activation can be at a number of different levels and as such, the electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000** could have a nearly infinite amount of automatic engagement and disengagement, in real-time, and throughout the ride. As such, the rider would have all of the normal suspension articulation during most of the ride and when different levels of violent suspension articulation events occurred, the chain pressure via the electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000** would be reduced to ensure full suspension articulation while also minimizing the opportunity for a violent feedback through the pedals that would be transferred to the rider.

[0103] In one embodiment, the damping force is electronic automatically controlled by controller **1010** in response to the input from sensor **415** when the bicycle **100** is in use. Optionally, the user may be able to override and/or adjust this automatic control using a manual input. For example, when sensor **415** puts out a voltage corresponding to terrain feature **55** (and/or optionally a dip, a downhill slope, an uphill slope, a coasting area, and the like) that voltage is transmitted to controller **1010** (e.g. a memory and a processor/microprocessor, or an ASIC). In one embodiment, electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000** engages or disengages pawls **1030** with cassette body assembly **1040** responsive to signals and power transmitted from the controller **1010**. In one embodiment, controller **1010** compares the output voltage of sensor **415** to a plurality of preset values. As the values increase, an electromagnetic circuit is used to engages or disengages pawls **1030** with cassette body assembly **1040**.

[0104] In one embodiment, when the output voltage of sensor **415** falls below a preset value, the electromagnetic circuit is used to engage or disengage pawls **1030** with respect to cassette body assembly **1040**. In one embodiment, some or all of components including sensor **415**, controller **1010**, and the like are interconnected or connected by wire, wireless, WAN, LAN, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, ANT (i.e. GARMIN low power usage protocol), or any suitable power or signal transmitting mechanism.

[0105] Although a plurality of different components is shown and described, it should be appreciated that electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000** can have more of fewer components. For example, a number of the components shown could be combined to a single component or could be broken from one into a plurality of components. Moreover, electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000** could include more of fewer of the components shown. The use of the designated separate components in the discussion is provided as one embodiment, of many possible and is shown merely for purposes of clarity.

[0106] Referring now to FIG. **11**, a partially exploded view of an electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000** is shown in accordance with an embodiment. In one embodiment, electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000** of FIG. **11** shows axle **15**, hub shell NDS **1005**, controller **1010**, one or more inductors/electromagnets **1015**, and ratchet ring **1020** and bearing **1025** in proper orientation and build. In addition, FIG. **11** shows the exploded view of the one or more pawls **1030**, seal **1035**, cassette body assembly **1040**, and end cap **1045**.

[0107] With reference now to FIG. **12**, a full section view of an electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000** is shown in accordance with an embodiment. In one embodiment, the section view of electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000** of FIG. **12** shows all of the components of electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000** in an as built orientation. The as built orientation shows axle **15**, hub shell NDS **1005**, controller **1010**, one or more inductors/electromagnets **1015**, ratchet ring **1020**, bearing **1025**, one or more pawls **1030**, seal

1035, cassette body assembly **1040**, and end cap **1045**.

[0108] Referring now to FIG. **13**, an opaque front view of an electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000** is shown in accordance with an embodiment. In one embodiment, electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly **1000** of FIG. **13** includes an axle **15**, one or more inductors/electromagnets **1015**, ratchet ring **1020**, bearing **1025**, one or more pawls **1030**.

[0109] Although described herein with respect to a bicycle suspension system, the embodiments illustrated in FIGS. **1-13** herein may be used with any type of suspended vehicle, as well as other types of suspension or damping systems.

[0110] The foregoing Description of Embodiments is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the embodiments to the precise form described. Instead, example embodiments in this Description of Embodiments have been presented in order to enable persons of skill in the art to make and use embodiments of the described subject matter. Moreover, various embodiments have been described in various combinations. However, any two or more embodiments could be combined. Although some embodiments have been described in a language specific to structural features and/or methodological acts, it is to be understood that the subject matter defined in the appended claims is not necessarily limited to the specific features or acts described above. Rather, the specific features and acts described above are disclosed by way of illustration and as example forms of implementing the claims and their equivalents.

Claims

1. An electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly comprising: an axle; a hub shell rotationally positioned about said axle; a bearing rotationally positioned about said axle; a ratchet ring rotationally positioned about said bearing, said ratchet ring having at least one tooth therein; at least one pawl to selectively engage or disengage with said at least one tooth of said ratchet ring, a selective disengagement of said at least one pawl from said at least one tooth of said ratchet ring will cause said electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly to enter a freewheel state, and a selective engagement of said at least one pawl with said at least one tooth of said ratchet ring will cause said electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly to enter a force transfer state; and a mechanical device coupled with said at least one pawl, said mechanical device to engage or disengage said at least one pawl with said at least one tooth of said cassette body assembly.
2. The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly of claim 1, wherein said mechanical device further comprises: a plurality of stepper motors coupled with said at least one pawl.
3. The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly of claim 1, wherein said mechanical device further comprises: a stepper motor; a plurality of linkages coupled with said stepper motor and said at least one pawl.
4. The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly of claim 1, wherein said mechanical device further comprises: a solenoid coupled with said at least one pawl.
5. The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly of claim 1, further comprising: said hub shell rotationally positioned about said axle on a non-drive side of a wheel; and said bearing rotationally positioned about said axle on a drive side of said wheel.
6. The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly of claim 1, further comprising: a controller to provide at least one automatic activation signal; and said mechanical device to receive said at least one automatic activation signal and engage said at least one pawl with said at least one tooth of said ratchet ring.
7. The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly of claim 1, further comprising: a controller to provide at least one automatic deactivation signal; and said mechanical device to receive said at least one automatic deactivation signal and disengage said at least one pawl from said at least one tooth of said ratchet ring.
8. The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly of claim 1, further comprising: a

controller to provide a plurality of automatic activation signals; said controller to provide a plurality of automatic deactivation signals; and said mechanical device to receive said plurality of automatic activation signals and said plurality of automatic deactivation signals and engage or disengage said at least one pawl with said at least one tooth of said ratchet ring in accordance therewith.

9. The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly of claim 1, further comprising: at least one sensor to provide an input to said controller, said input causing said controller to automatically provide said at least one automatic signal to said mechanical device.

10. The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly of claim 9, wherein said at least one sensor is selected from a group of sensors consisting of: an accelerometer, an optical detection device, and an image capturing device.

11. The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly of claim 1, further comprising: said ratchet ring having a plurality of teeth therein; and said mechanical device comprising a plurality of pawls, said plurality of pawls to selectively engage or disengage with at least two of said plurality of teeth of said ratchet ring.

12. The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly of claim 1, further comprising: a seal to contain said at least one pawl within said electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly; a cassette body assembly coupled with said ratchet ring; and an end cap coupled with said cassette body assembly to prevent a contaminant entry into said electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly.

13. The electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly of claim 1, wherein said mechanical device is activated by a manual input provided by a user of a vehicle including said electronic automatically decoupling hub assembly.
