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(54) **PONTOON BOAT WITH SLIDE-OUT COMPARTMENT**

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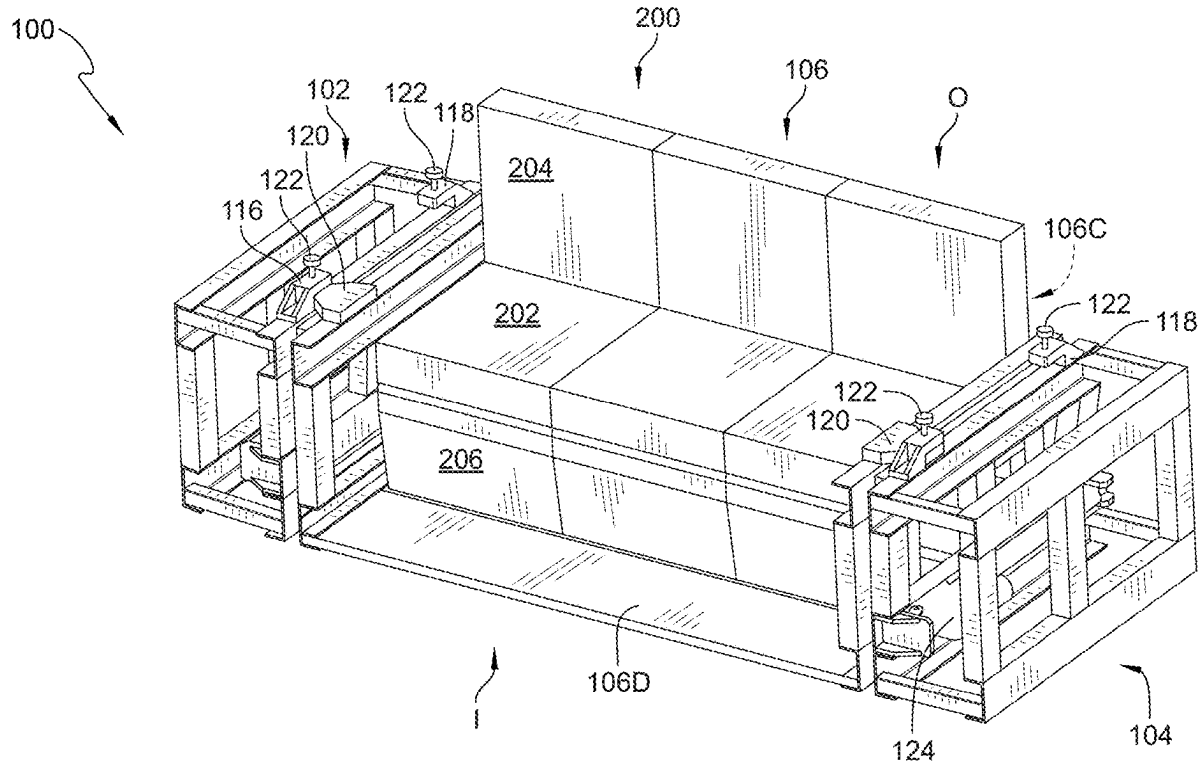
(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC ***B63B 29/04*** (2013.01); ***B63B 1/121*** (2013.01); ***B63B 35/38*** (2013.01); *B63B 2029/043* (2013.01)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A pontoon boat includes first and second pontoons, a frame supported by the pontoons, and a deck supported by the frame, and a slide-out compartment above the deck. The slide-out compartment includes a movable section movably supported by first and second fixed sections. The first and second fixed sections are supported by the frame. The movable section is movable between a first or retracted position in which the movable section is relatively near an interior region of the pontoon boat and a second or extended position in which the movable section is relatively far from the interior region of the pontoon boat. In the first position, the movable section occludes a portion of the deck. In the second position, the movable section does not occlude the portion of the deck.



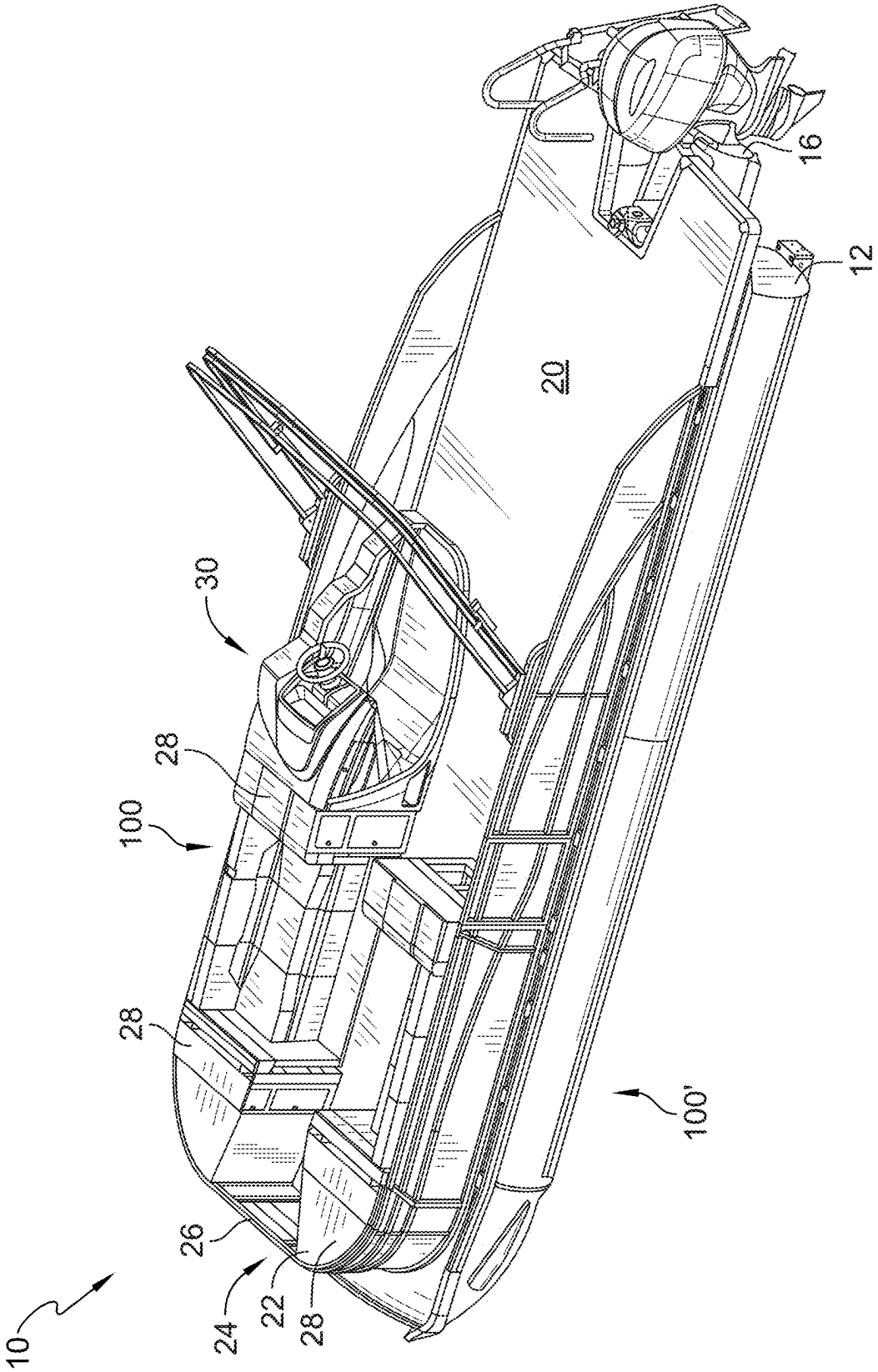


FIG. 1

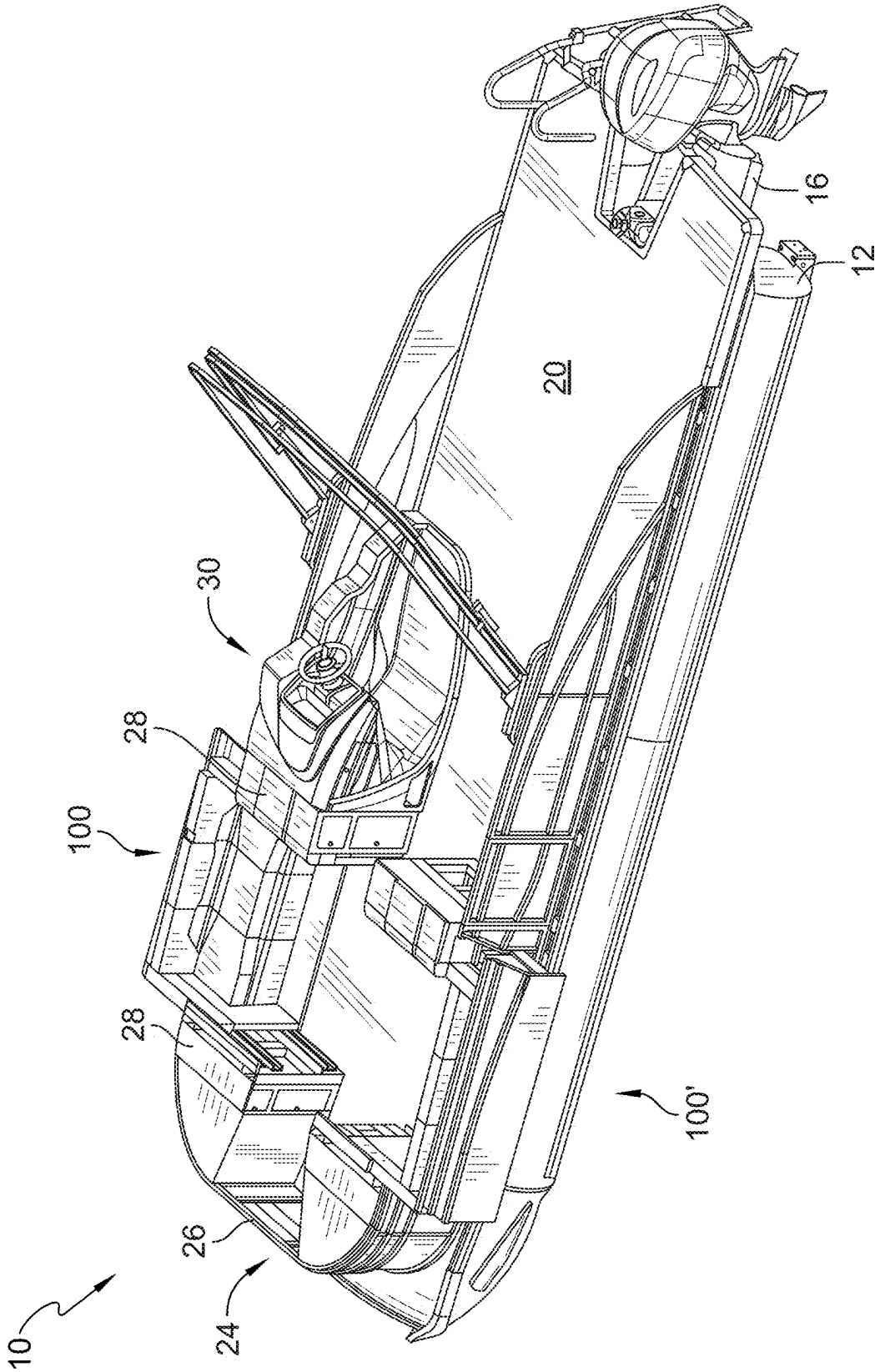


FIG. 2

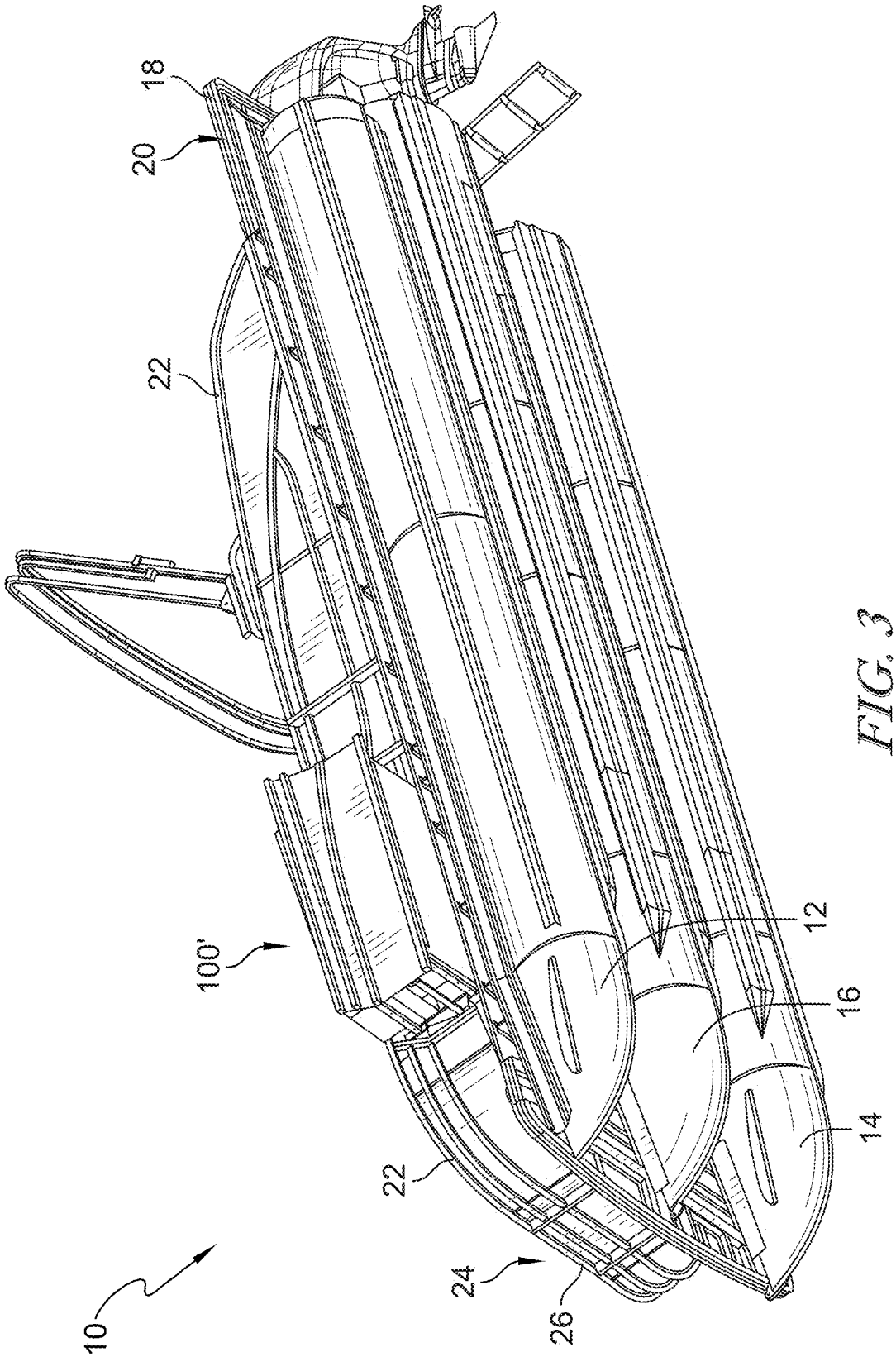


FIG. 3

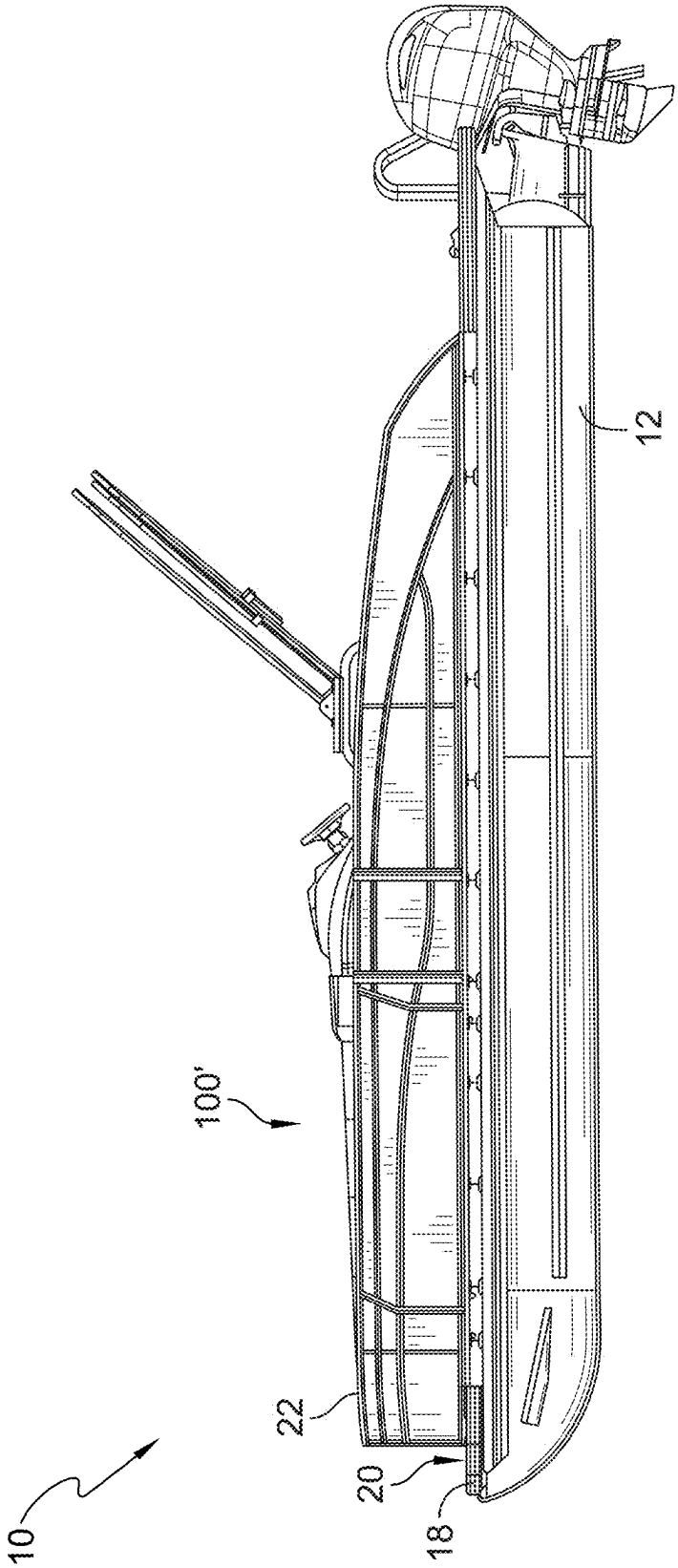


FIG. 4

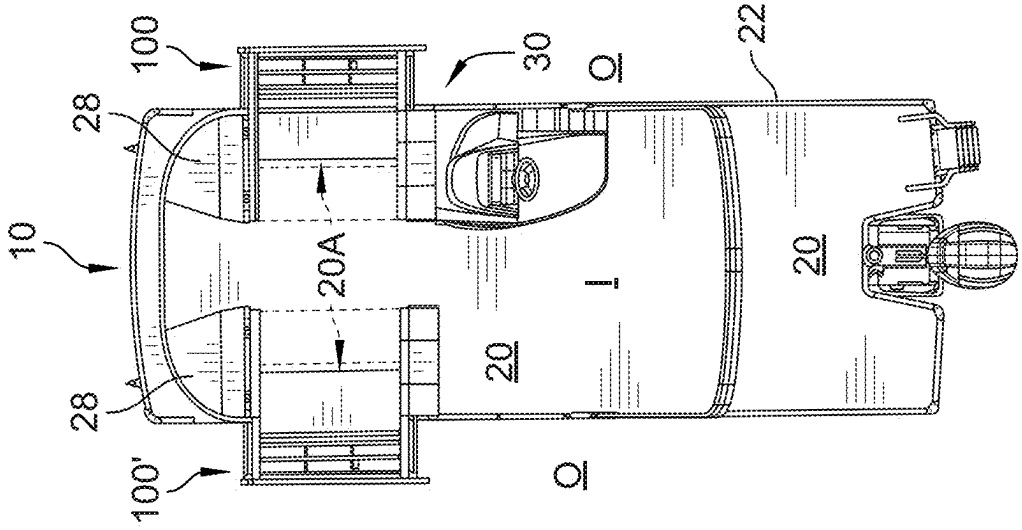


FIG. 7

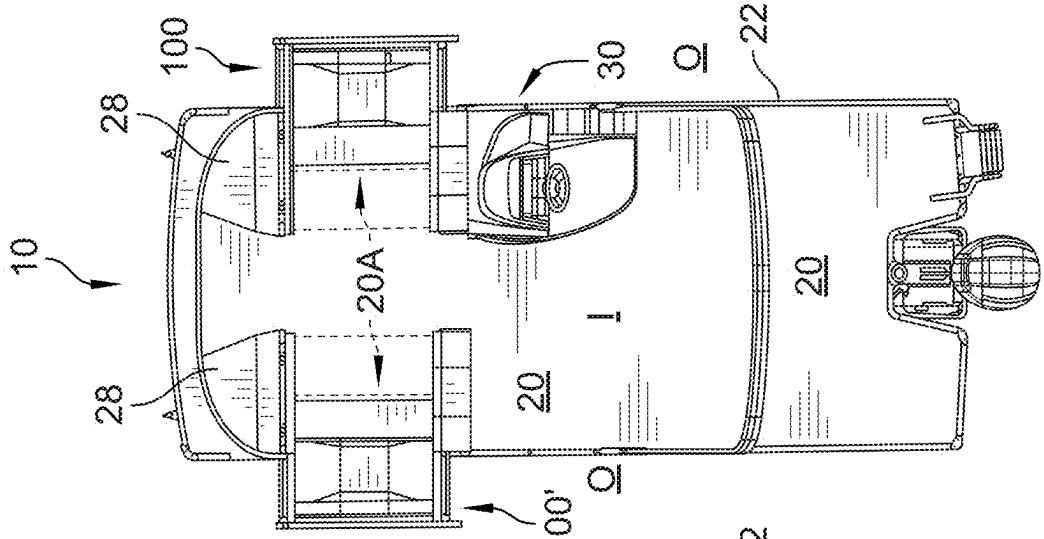


FIG. 6

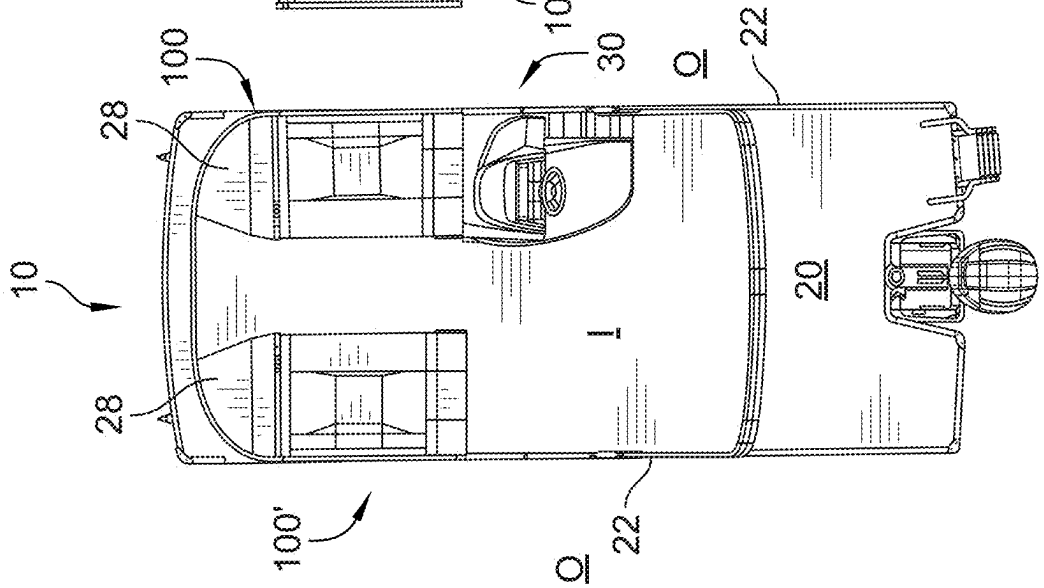


FIG. 5

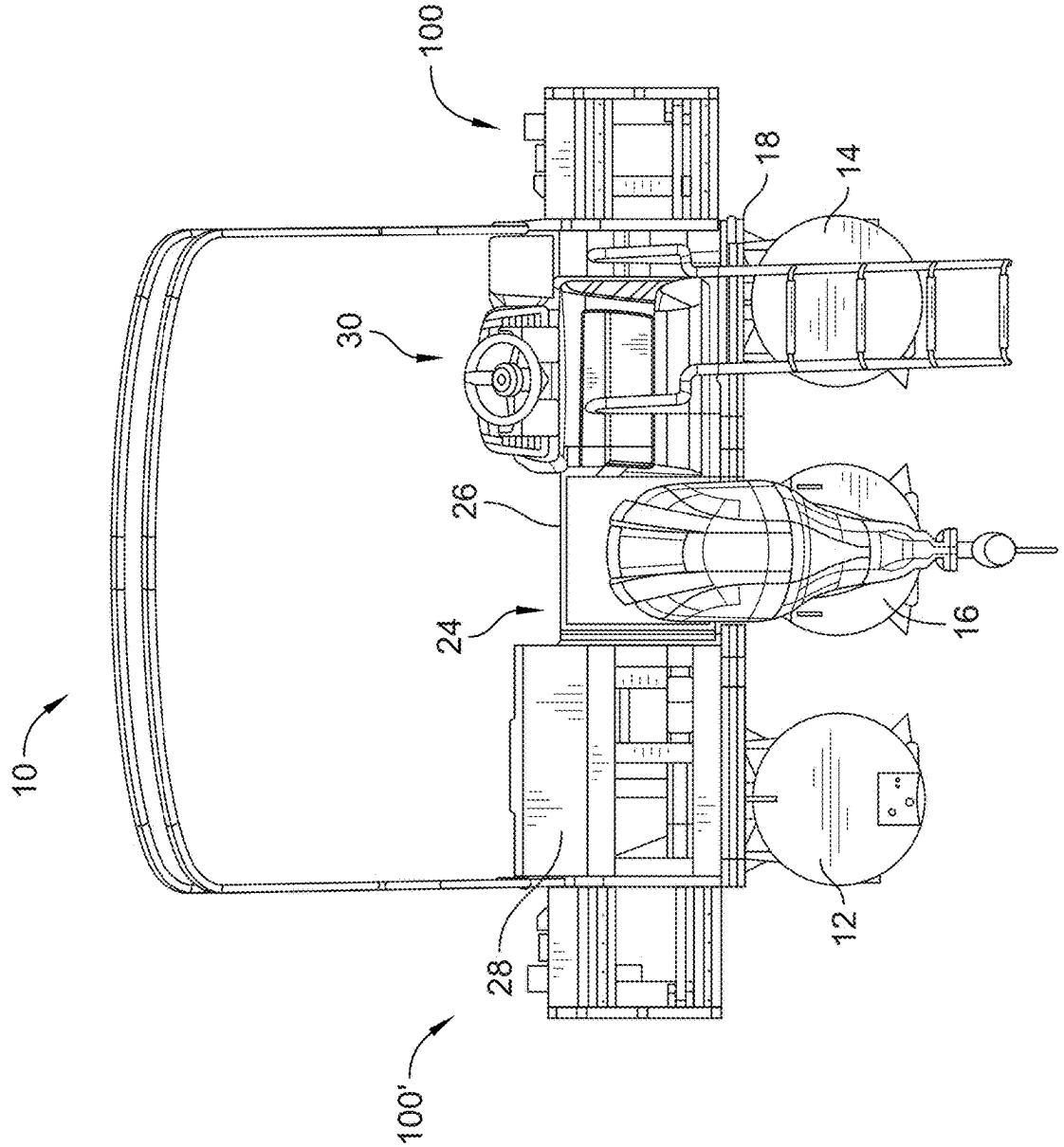


FIG. 8

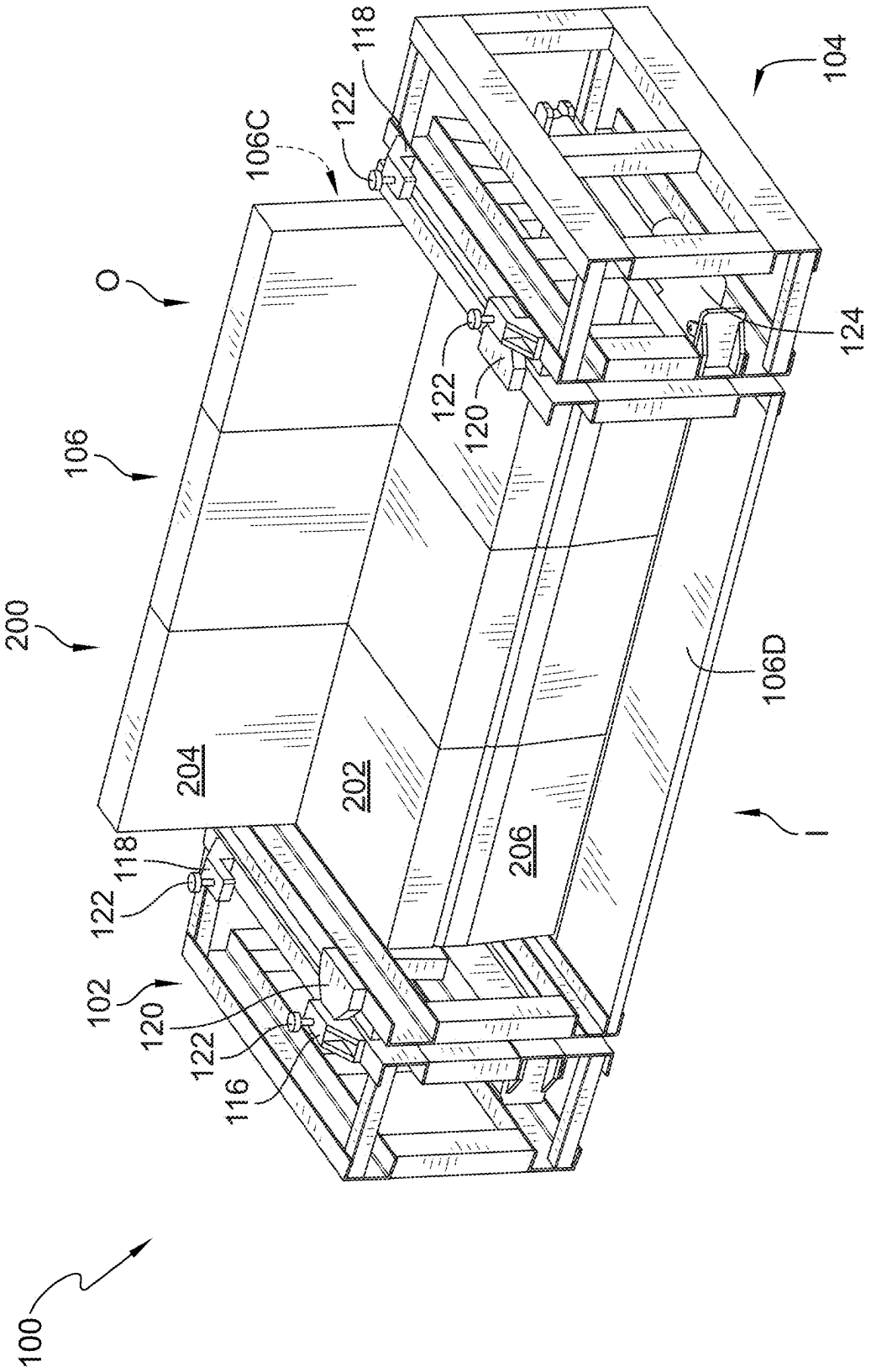


FIG. 9

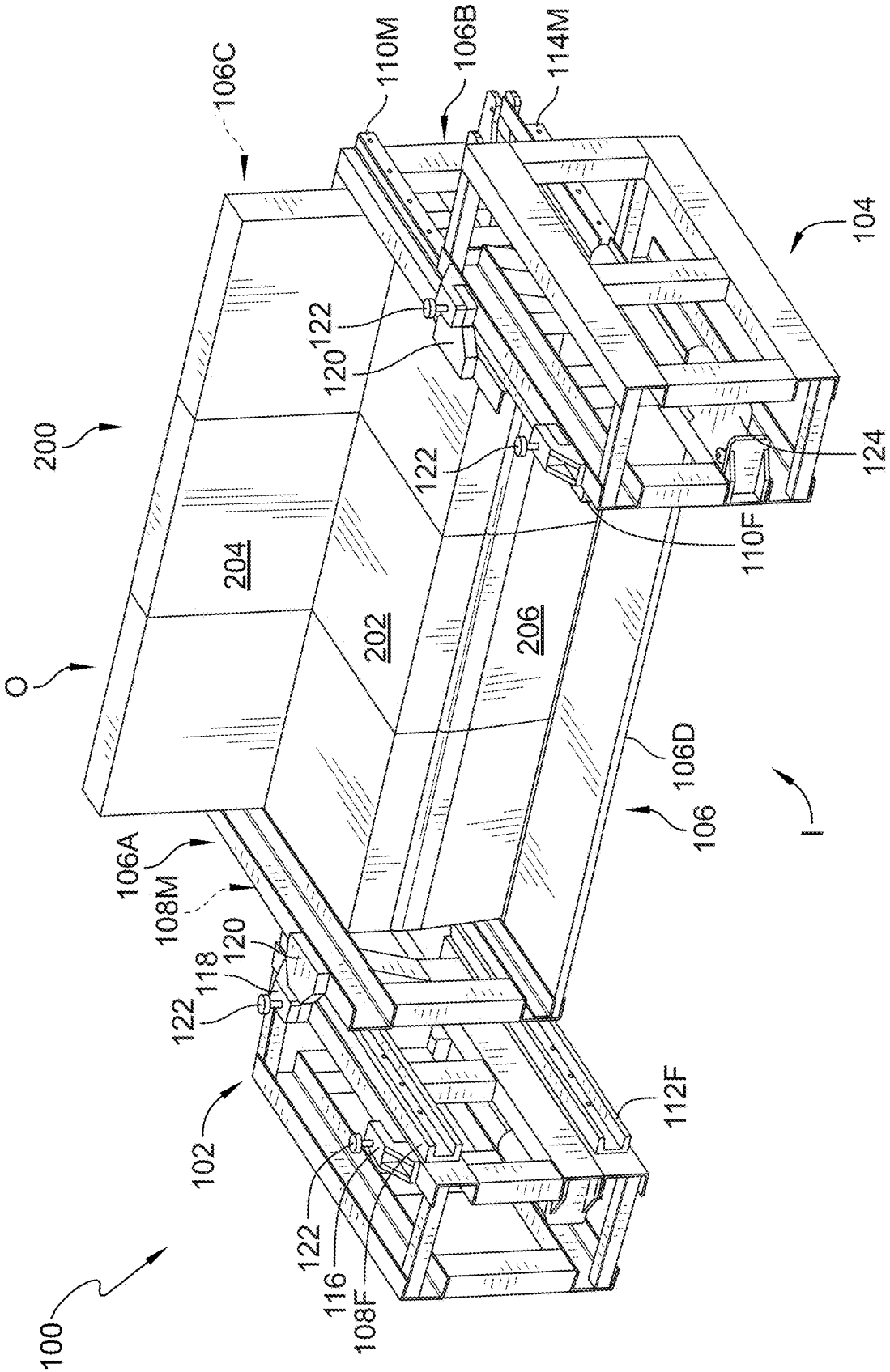

100
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FIG. 10

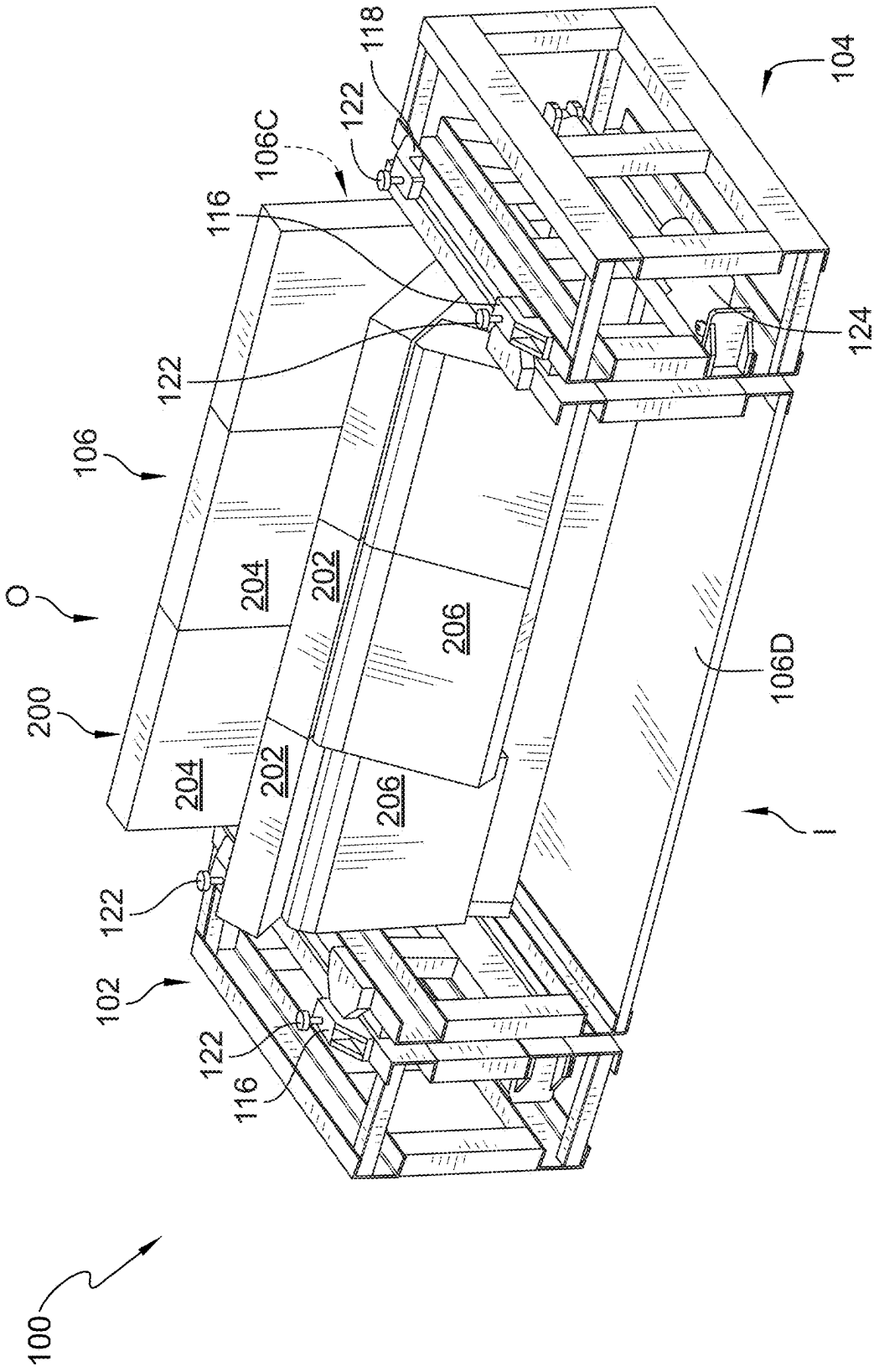

FIG. 11

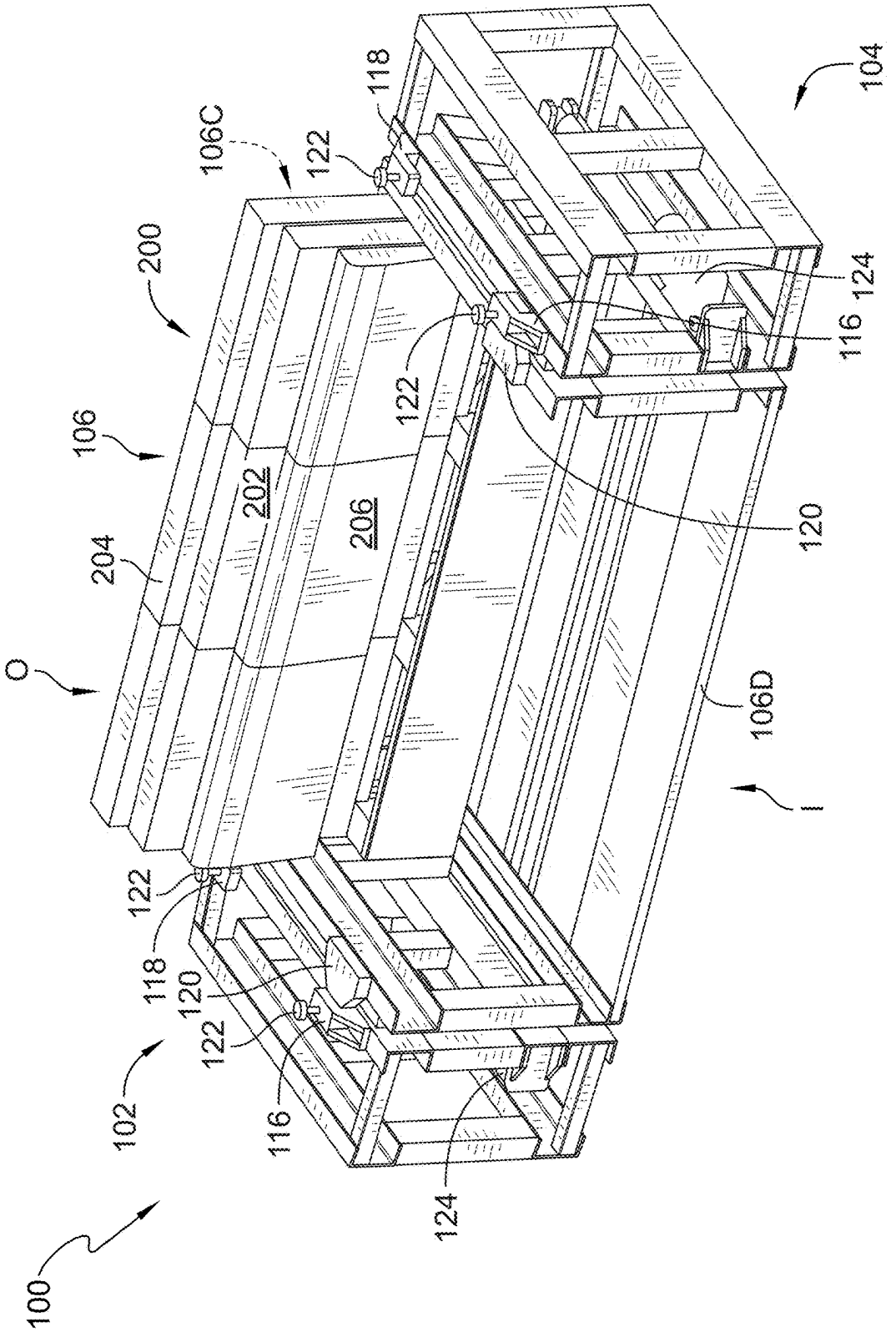

FIG. 12

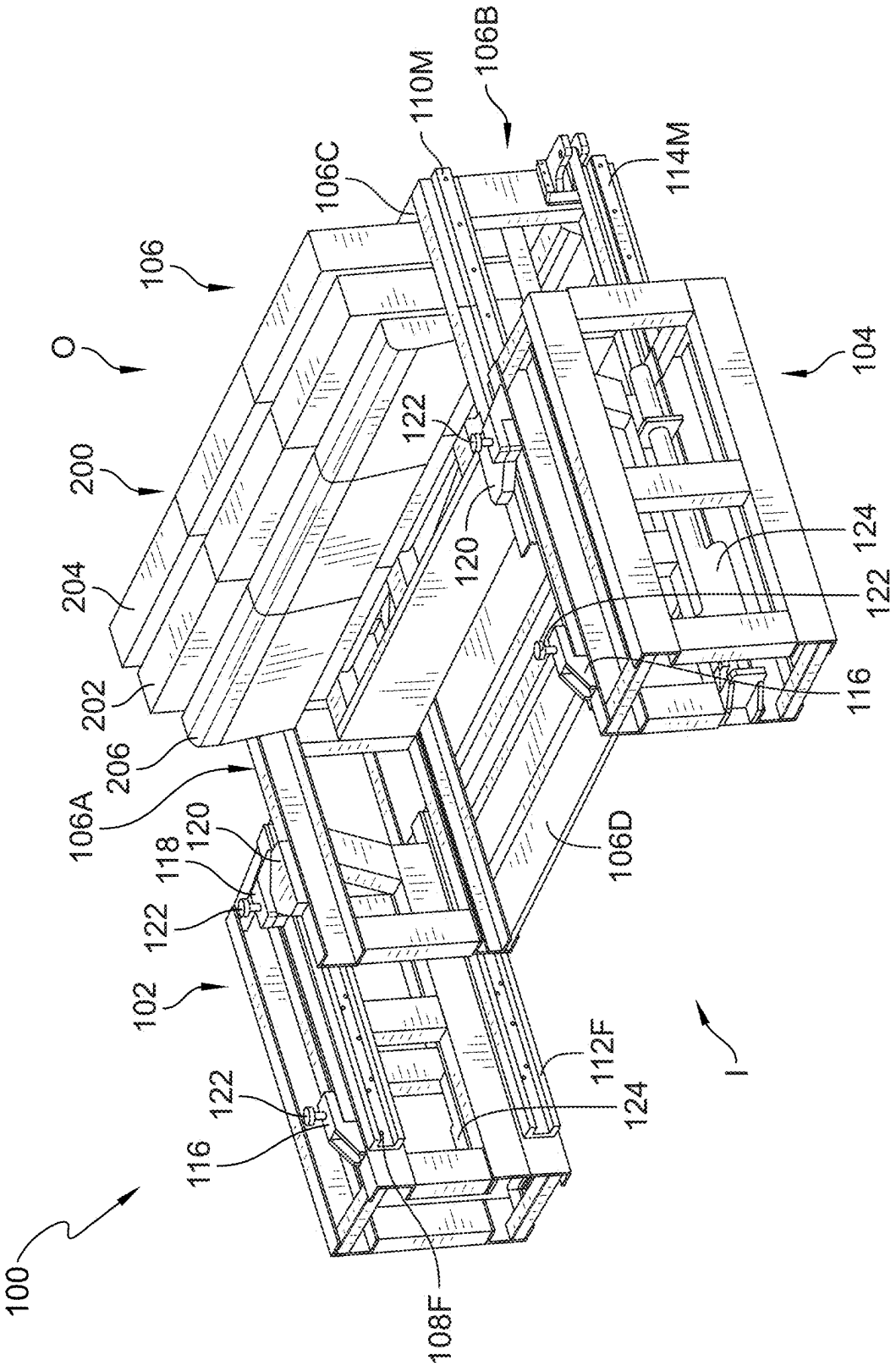
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FIG. 13

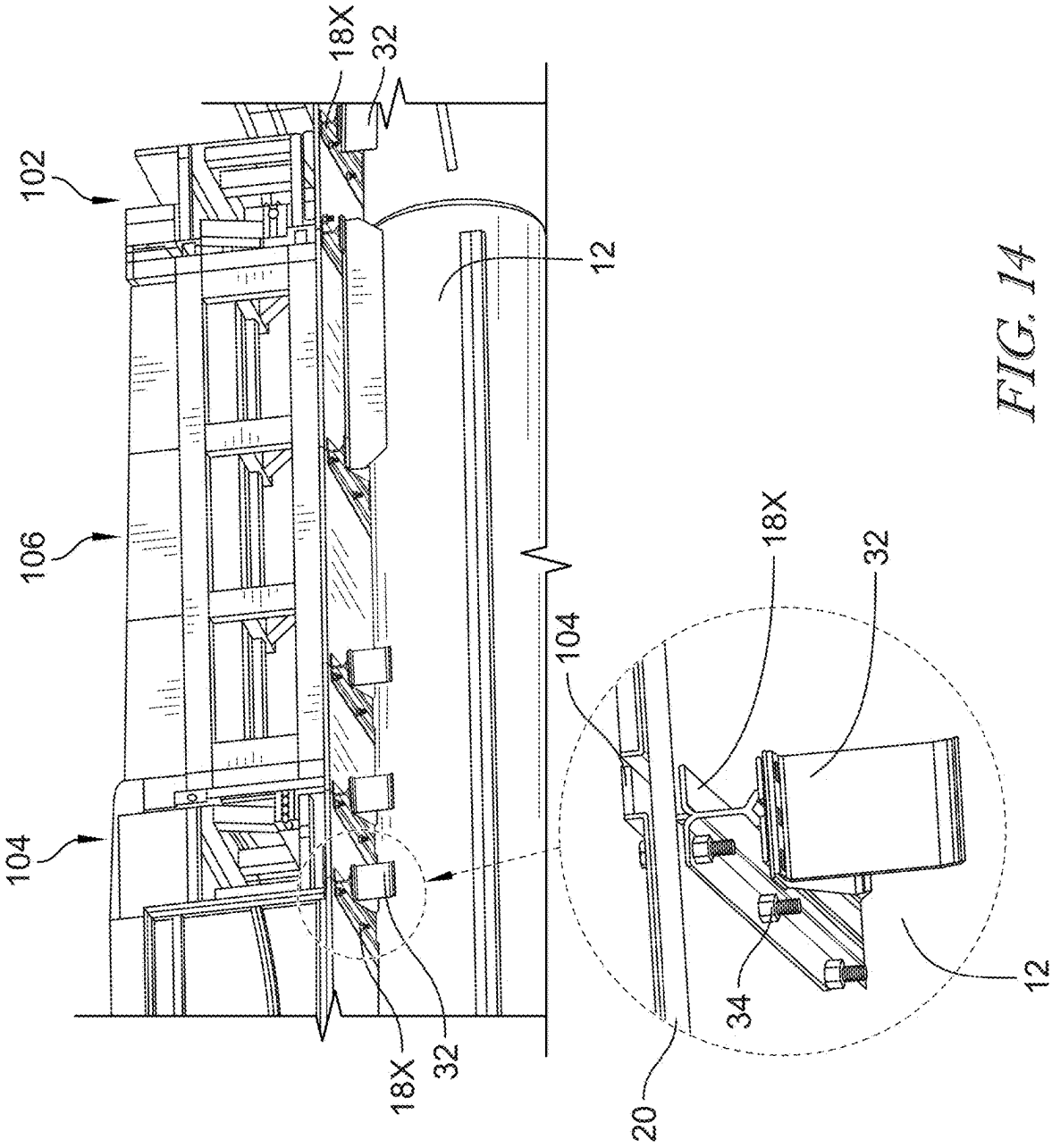

FIG. 14

PONTOON BOAT WITH SLIDE-OUT COMPARTMENT

BACKGROUND OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0001] An advantage of pontoon boats compared to other forms of watercraft is that pontoon boats typically provide a large amount of passenger space for a given boat length and width. A typical pontoon boat includes a deck supported by a frame, which in turn is supported by at least a port pontoon and a starboard pontoon. Typically, a passenger barrier extends around at least a portion of the deck near the perimeter of the deck. The passenger barrier is configured to inhibit passengers from inadvertently stepping off the deck and falling into the water below the deck. The passenger barrier often takes the form of a rail system having openings through which passengers can board or disembark the pontoon boat. Each such opening typically is provided with a gate configured to selectively open and close the opening. Nearly the entirety of the deck area within the passenger barrier is readily usable by a passenger on the pontoon boat. Thus, the deck may define a passenger space having an area nearly as great as the footprint defined by the port and starboard pontoons.

[0002] Some of the passenger space is occupied by a helm and various forms of deck furniture disposed upon or above the deck. Such deck furniture may include without limitation, seating units, storage units, tables, or combinations thereof. For example, a pontoon boat seating unit may combine a bench having a seat and a backrest, with a storage unit underneath the seat and another storage unit behind the backrest. Another portion of the passenger space is left open so that passengers may freely walk about the deck to easily access the deck furniture and to easily board and disembark the pontoon boat as desired.

[0003] Notwithstanding the high percentage of usable passenger space on the deck of a typical pontoon boat, a user of the pontoon boat might nevertheless desire more usable passenger space. Typically, the desire for more usable space can be met only by providing a larger boat. However, a larger boat typically would be more costly and more difficult to trailer and store than a smaller boat.

[0004] It would be desirable to provide a pontoon boat with more usable passenger space without increasing the boat's overall size.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0005] The present disclosure is directed to a pontoon boat having a first pontoon, a second pontoon, a frame connected to and supported by the first and second pontoons, a deck supported by the frame, the deck defining an interior region of the pontoon boat, and a slide-out compartment. The slide-out compartment includes a first fixed section attached to the frame, a second fixed section attached to the frame, and a movable section slidingly supported by the first and second fixed sections. The movable section is selectively movable between a first position in which the movable section is disposed relatively near the interior region of the pontoon boat and substantially between the first and second fixed sections, and a second position in which the movable section is disposed relatively far from the interior region of the pontoon boat and is at least partially outboard of the first and second fixed sections.

[0006] In embodiments, the slide-out compartment includes a first slide mechanism connected between the first fixed section and the movable section second, and a second slide mechanism connected between the second fixed section and the movable section. The first slide mechanism may include a fixed rail connected to the first fixed section and a movable rail connected to the movable section.

[0007] In embodiments, the slide-out compartment includes a travel limiter configured to limit travel of the movable section with respect to the first fixed section in at least one of a direction toward the interior region of the pontoon boat and a direction away from the interior region of the pontoon boat. The travel limiter may include a first stop block connected to one of the first fixed section and the movable section, and a stop arm connected to the other of the first fixed section and the movable section. The travel limiter also may include a second stop block connected to one of the first fixed section and the movable section. In embodiments, the slide-out compartment includes a travel lock configured to inhibit movement of the movable section with respect to the first fixed section.

[0008] In embodiments, the slide-out compartment may include a prime mover connected between the movable section and one of the first fixed section and the second fixed section. The prime mover may be connected between the movable section and the other of the first fixed section and the second fixed section. In embodiments, the slide-out compartment may include a second prime mover connected between the movable section and the other of the first fixed section and the second fixed section. The prime mover may be a telescopic actuator.

[0009] In embodiments, the pontoon boat may include a control system configured to control operation of the prime mover. The control system may include an interlock configured to inhibit operation of the pontoon boat under power if the movable section is not in the first position.

[0010] In embodiments, the movable section of the slide-out compartment may occlude a portion of the deck when the movable section is in the first position, and not occlude the portion of the deck when the movable section is in the second position. In embodiments, the movable section includes a floor which may occlude a portion of the deck when the movable section is in the first position, and not occlude the portion of the deck when the movable section is in the second position.

[0011] In embodiments, the movable section may include a bench. The bench may be convertible between a deployed configuration and a stowed configuration. The bench may include a seat, a backrest, and a kick. The seat may be pivotable with respect to the backrest between a seating orientation in which the seat is generally perpendicular to the backrest and a stowed orientation in which the seat is generally parallel to the backrest. The kick may be pivotable with respect to the seat between a first position in which the kick is generally perpendicular to the seat and a second position in which the kick is generally parallel to the seat.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] FIG. **1** is an upper perspective view of an illustrative pontoon boat with two slide-out compartments according to the present disclosure, showing the slide out compartments in a retracted configuration;

[0013] FIG. **2** is an upper perspective view of the pontoon boat of FIG. **1** showing the slide-out compartments in an extended configuration;

[0014] FIG. **3** is a lower perspective view of the pontoon boat of FIG. **1** showing the slide-out compartments in an extended configuration;

[0015] FIG. **4** is a port side elevation view of the pontoon boat of FIG. **1**;

[0016] FIG. **5** is a top plan view of the pontoon boat of FIG. **1** showing the slide-out compartments in a retracted configuration;

[0017] FIG. **6** is a top plan view of the pontoon boat of FIG. **1** showing the slide-out compartments in an extended configuration and with seat cushions in a deployed configuration;

[0018] FIG. **7** is a top plan view of the pontoon boat of FIG. **1** showing the slide-out compartments in an extended configuration and with seat cushions in a stowed configuration;

[0019] FIG. **8** is a rear (aft) elevation view of the pontoon boat of FIG. **1** showing the slide-out compartments in an extended configuration;

[0020] FIG. **9** is a perspective view of an illustrative slide-out compartment having first and second fixed sections, a movable section, and a convertible bench according to the present disclosure, with the movable section in a retracted position and the convertible bench in a deployed configuration;

[0021] FIG. **10** is a perspective view of the slide-out compartment of FIG. **9** with the movable section in an extended position and the convertible bench in the deployed configuration;

[0022] FIG. **11** is a perspective view of the slide-out compartment of FIG. **9** with the movable section in the retracted position and the convertible bench in a configuration intermediate the deployed configuration and a stowed configuration;

[0023] FIG. **12** is a perspective view of the slide-out compartment of FIG. **9** with the movable section in the retracted position and the convertible bench in the stowed configuration;

[0024] FIG. **13** is a perspective view of the slide-out compartment of FIG. **9** with the movable section in the extended position and the convertible bench in the stowed configuration; and

[0025] FIG. **14** is a perspective view and detail view showing an illustrative connection of the fixed sections to a frame of the pontoon boat by bolted attachment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0026] Terms such as forward, aft, port, starboard, left, right, up, down, front, rear, upper, lower, vertical, horizontal, and the like, as might be used herein, should be construed in a relative sense, rather than an absolute sense, unless context clearly dictates otherwise.

[0027] FIGS. **1-8** show an illustrative pontoon boat **10** having a first slide-out compartment **100** and a second slide-out compartment **100'** opposite the first slide-out compartment **100**. FIGS. **1-8** show the slide-out compartments **100**, **100'** near the bow of the pontoon boat **10** and proximate respective port and starboard sides of the pontoon boat **10**. In embodiments, either or both of the first and second slide-out compartments **100**, **100'** may be located elsewhere. For example, without limitation, either or both of the first and slide-out compartment **100**, **100'** may be located proximate any of the port side of the pontoon boat **10**, the starboard side of the pontoon boat **10**, the bow of the pontoon boat **10**, and the stern of the pontoon boat **10**. In embodiments, the second slide-out compartment **100'** may be omitted, and the first slide-out compartment may be located as desired with respect to the pontoon boat **10**. In embodiments, one or more further slide-out compartments may be provided in addition to the first and second slide-out compartments **100**, **100'**. Such further slide-out compartments may be located as desired with respect to the pontoon boat **10**.

[0028] The first and second slide-out compartments **100**, **100'** are configured to selectively provide additional, accessible and usable deck space on the pontoon boat **10**. To this end, each of the slide-out compartments **100**, **100'** includes a movable section movable in directions toward and away from an interior region of the pontoon boat **10**, as will be discussed further below. In embodiments, either or both of the slide-out compartments **100**, **100'** may include a furniture unit, for example, without limitation, a convertible bench, as will be discussed further below.

[0029] As shown, the pontoon boat **10** includes a port pontoon **12**, a starboard pontoon **14** spaced from and parallel to the port pontoon **12**, and an optional center pontoon **16** spaced from, between, and parallel to the port pontoon **12** and the starboard pontoon **14**. A frame **18** is disposed above and connected to each of the port pontoon **12**, the starboard pontoon **14**, and the optional center pontoon **16**. A deck **20** is disposed above and connected to the frame **18**.

[0030] A passenger barrier **22**, for example, a railing or other structure, extends about the deck **20** near the outer perimeter of the deck **20**. The passenger barrier **22** extends upwardly from the deck **20**, and it may be connected to one or both of the frame **18** and the deck **20**. The passenger barrier **22** may define one or more openings **24** configured to allow passage therethrough. A corresponding gate **26** operable by a user of the pontoon boat **10** may be provided to selectively open and close each such opening **24**. The passenger barrier **22** generally defines the interior region of the pontoon boat **10**, the interior region being located generally within the confines of the passenger barrier **22**.

[0031] A variety of deck furniture **28**, including, without limitation, benches and storage units, may be provided above the deck **20**. At least some of the deck furniture **28** may be disposed proximate the perimeter of the deck **20** and within the confines of the passenger barrier **22**. In embodiments, the deck furniture **28** may define at least a portion of the passenger barrier **22**. For example, without limitation, a back rest of a seating unit facing the interior of the pontoon boat **10** may function as a portion of the passenger barrier. The deck furniture **28** may be connected to one or both of the frame **18** and the deck **20**.

[0032] A helm **30** may be provided above the deck **20**. The helm **30** may include a seat, instruments, and controls, as would be understood by one skilled in the art.

[0033] Similarly, each of the slide-out compartments **100**, **100'**, discussed in greater detail below, may be provided above the deck **20** and may be disposed proximate the perimeter of the deck **20**. So located, either or both of the slide-out compartments **100**, **100'** may define at least a portion of the passenger barrier **22**.

[0034] As shown, the first slide-out compartment **100** and the second slide-out compartment **100'** are mirror images of

each other. One skilled in the art would understand that the second slide-out compartment **100'** may be, but need not be, configured and operated in a manner similar to the first slide-out compartment **100**. One skilled in the art also would understand that any additional slide-out compartment(s) may be, but need not be, configured and operated in a manner similar to the first slide-out compartment **100**. For brevity, only the first slide-out compartment **100** will be described in detail herein, and it may be referred to herein simply as "the slide-out compartment **100**."

[0035] FIGS. **9-13** show the slide-out compartment **100** in greater detail. As shown, the slide-out compartment **100** includes a first fixed section **102**, a second fixed section **104** spaced in a first direction from the first fixed section **102**, and a movable section **106**. The slide-out compartment **100** and, therefore, each of the first fixed section **102**, the second fixed section **104**, and the movable section **106** has an inboard side I facing the interior region of the pontoon boat **10** and an outboard side O facing away from the interior region of the pontoon boat **10**. Each of the first fixed section **102** and the second fixed section **104** may be securely connected to either or both of the frame **18** and the deck **20**. For example, as shown in FIG. **14**, each of the first fixed section **102** and the second fixed section **104** may be connected to the frame **18**, for example to a cross member **18**X of the frame **18** by bolted attachment using threaded fasteners **34**. In embodiments, the first fixed section **102** and the second fixed section **104** may be connected to the frame **18** by welded attachment thereto. The cross member **18**X may in turn be connected to the ones of the pontoons **12**, **14**, **16** via intervening risers **32**. The movable section **106** is movably connected to the first fixed section **102** by at least a first slide mechanism **108**, and to the second fixed section **104** by at least a second slide mechanism **110**, as will be discussed further below.

[0036] The first and second slide mechanisms **108**, **110** are operable to enable the movable section **106** to move back and forth in a second direction between first and second positions with respect to the first fixed section **102** and the second fixed section **104**. The second direction is perpendicular to the first direction. In the first position (which may be referred to herein as the retracted position), the movable section **106** is disposed relatively near the interior region of the pontoon boat and generally between the first and second fixed sections **102**, **104**. In the second position (which may be referred to herein as the extended position), the movable section **106** is disposed relatively far from the interior region of the pontoon boat and generally outboard O of the first and second fixed sections **102**, **104**. As shown, the first and second slide mechanisms **108**, **110** are configured so that the second direction is generally parallel to the deck **20**. As such, the movable section **106** is movable toward and away from an interior region of the pontoon boat **10**, generally parallel to the deck **20**. In embodiments, the first and second slide mechanisms **108**, **110** could be configured so that the second direction has components both parallel to and perpendicular to the deck **20**. As such, the movable section **106** could be movable toward and away from the interior region of the pontoon boat **10** and simultaneously toward and away from the deck **20**.

[0037] As shown, the movable section **106** is disposed generally between the first and second fixed sections **102**, **104** when the movable section **106** is in the first (or retracted) position, and the movable section **106** is disposed generally outboard O of the first and second fixed sections **102**, **104** when the movable section **106** is in the second (or extended) position. As best shown in FIG. **5**, when the movable section **106** is in the retracted position, the movable section **106** covers a selectively occluded portion **20**A of the deck **20**, such that the selectively occluded portion of the deck **20** generally is inaccessible from above for occupation or use by a passenger. As best shown in FIGS. **6** and **7**, when the movable section **106** is in the second position, the movable section **106** does not cover the selectively occluded portion of the deck **20**, thus rendering the selectively occluded portion **20**A of the deck **20** accessible from above for occupation or use by a passenger. See FIGS. **9** and **10**.

[0038] The movable section **106** includes a first side portion **106**A and a second side portion **106**B spaced from the first side portion **106**A. A back portion **106**C is disposed between and connected to each of the first and second side portions **106**A, **106**B, proximate corresponding rear or outer ends thereof. As suggested above, the back portion **106**C of the moveable section **106** may serve as a portion of the passenger barrier **22**, regardless of whether the movable section **106** is in the first position the second position, or therebetween. Also, the first and second side portions **106**A, **106**B of the movable section **106** may serve as a portion of the passenger barrier **22** when the movable section **106** is in the second position. A bottom portion **106**D is disposed between and connected to each of the first and second side portions **106**A, **106**B, proximate corresponding lower or bottom ends thereof. As shown in the drawings, the bottom portion **106**D of the movable section **106** may be embodied as or otherwise include a floor configured to enable users to stand thereon. As suggested above, the floor would overlie the selectively occluded portion **20**A of the deck **20** when the movable section **106** is in the first position but not when the movable section **106** is in the second position.

[0039] As mentioned above, the movable section **106** is movably connected to the first fixed section **102** by the first slide mechanism **108**, and to the second fixed section **104** by the second slide mechanism **110**. As shown, the movable section **106** is further connected to the first fixed section **102** by an optional third slide mechanism **112**, and the movable section **106** is further connected to the second fixed section **104** by an optional fourth slide mechanism **114**. As shown, each of the slide mechanism **108-114** is identical to or a mirror image of another of the slide mechanisms **108-114**.

[0040] As shown, the first slide mechanism **108** includes a fixed rail **108**F connected to an upper region of the first fixed section **102** and a movable rail **108**M connected to an upper region of the first side **106**A of the movable portion **104**. Similarly, the second slide mechanism **110** includes a fixed rail **110**F connected to an upper region of the second fixed section **104** and a movable rail **110**M connected to an upper region of the second side **106**B of the movable portion **106**. Also, the third slide mechanism **112** includes a fixed rail **112**F connected to a lower region of the first fixed section **102** and a movable rail **112**M connected to a lower region of the first side **106**A of the movable portion **106**. Similarly, the fourth slide mechanism **114** includes a fixed rail **114**F connected to a lower region of the second fixed section **104** and a movable rail **114**M connected to a lower region of the second side **106**B of the movable portion **106**. Each of the foregoing fixed rails **108**F, **110**F, **112**F, **114**F slidingly engages with the corresponding movable rail **108**M, **110**M, **112**M, **114**M in a manner that would be understood by one

skilled in the art. Bearings, low friction surfaces, or the like (not shown) may be provided between respective pairs of the rails **108**F/M, **110**F/M, **112**F/M, **114**F/M of the slide mechanisms **108**, **110**, **112**, **114**, as would be understood by one skilled in the art. An intermediate rail (not shown) may be disposed between the fixed rail and movable rail of any or all of the slide mechanisms **108**, **110**, **112**, **114**, as would be understood by one skilled in the art.

[0041] The foregoing slide mechanisms **108**, **110**, **112**, **114** are illustrative and not limiting. One skilled in the art would understand that any or all of the slide mechanisms **108**, **110**, **112**, **114** could be embodied as any form of mechanism configured to enable controlled, relative translation or sliding of the movable section **106** with respect to the first and second fixed sections **102**, **104**. Further non-limiting examples of mechanisms that may be used to effect such relative motion include rack and pinion systems, slide blocks, and the like.

[0042] The slide-out compartment **100** may include one or more travel limiters configured to limit the travel of the movable section **106** with respect to the first and second fixed sections **102**, **104** when the movable section **106** is moved between the first and second positions. For example, as shown, each of the first and second fixed sections **102**, **104** includes a first (or inboard) stop block **116** proximate an inboard end I thereof, and a second (or outboard) stop block **118** proximate an outboard end O thereof. Also, the movable section **106** includes a stop arm **120** connected to each of the first and second side portions **106**A, **106**B thereof. The stop arms **120** are located so that they may engage with the corresponding first stop block **116** to preclude movement of the movable section **106** in an inboard direction I further than desired, and so that they may engage with the corresponding second stop block **118** to preclude movement of the movable section **106** in an outboard direction O further than desired. The stop arms **120** may be, but need not be, located so that they engage with the corresponding first stop block **116** at the desired inboard travel limit, and so that they engage with the corresponding second stop block **118** at the desired outboard travel limit. That is, a gap may remain between the stop arms **120** and the corresponding first and second stop blocks **116**, **118** at the desired travel limits. In embodiments, the relative locations of the stop blocks **116**, **118** and the stop arms could be reversed. That is, the stop blocks **116**, **118** could be connected to the respective first and second side portions **106**A, **106**B of the movable section **106**, and the stop arms **120** could be connected to the respective first and second fixed portions **102**, **104**.

[0043] The slide-out compartment **100** may further include one or more travel locks to secure the movable section **106** in the retracted position, the extended position, or an intermediate position with respect to the first and second side sections **102**, **104**. For example, as shown, each stop block **116**, **118** may include a corresponding extension **116**A, **118**A defining a corresponding through-hole (not shown). A corresponding locking pin **122** having a longitudinal axis and a free end is received by each of the foregoing through-holes (not shown) in a manner that allows the locking pin **122** to be selectively moved along its longitudinal axis, as would be understood by one skilled in the art. For example, the locking pin **122** could be slidingly engaged with the corresponding stop block **116**, **118** through-hole (not shown) and moved axially by application of an appropriate axial force. Such sliding engagement could be sufficiently tight to preclude to locking pin **122** from sliding under its own weight, yet sufficiently loose to allow a user to slide the locking pin **122** without applying undue force thereto. Alternatively, the locking pin **122** could be threadingly engaged with the corresponding stop block **116**, **118** through-hole (not shown) and moved axially by screwing the locking pin into or out of the through-hole. Also, each of the stop arms **120** defines a corresponding hole (not shown) configured to selectively receive the free end of the corresponding locking pin **122**, as would be understood by one skilled in the art.

[0044] In use, the movable section **106** may be locked into the retracted position by aligning the locking pins **122** of the first stop blocks **116** with the corresponding holes (not shown) in the respective stop arms **120**, and then engaging the locking pins **122** of the first stop blocks **116** with the corresponding holes of the respective stop arms **120**. Similarly, the movable section **106** may be locked into the extended position by aligning the locking pins **122** of the second stop blocks **118** with the corresponding holes in the respective stop arms **120**, and then engaging the locking pins **122** of the second stop blocks **118** with the corresponding holes of the respective stop arms **120**. The movable section **106** may be unlocked from either locked position by disengaging the applicable locking pins **122** from the corresponding holes in the respective stop arms **120**.

[0045] The foregoing arrangement of travel limiters and travel locks is illustrative and not limiting. One skilled in the art would understand that any or all of the foregoing travel limiters and travel locks could be embodied as any mechanism configured to limit and selectively preclude travel of the movable section **106** with respect to the first and second fixed sections **102**, **104**.

[0046] The movable section **106** may be manually operable. For example, a user may move the movable section **106** between the first and second positions by disengaging the locking pins **122**, if provided and engaged, and by pushing or pulling the unlocked movable section **106** as desired to move it from the any of the first position, the second position, and an intermediate position to or toward another of the first position, the second position, or an intermediate position. Once the user has moved the movable section **106** to one of the first and second positions, the user may manually engage the locking pins **122**, if provided, as suggested above to lock the movable section **106** in place there.

[0047] Alternatively or additionally, the movable section **106** may be power-operated. For example, as shown, the slide-out compartment **100** includes a first prime mover **124** connected between the movable section **106** and the first fixed section **102**, and a second prime mover **124** connected between the movable section **106** and the second fixed section **104**. The first and second prime movers **124** are configured to exert force on the movable section **106** and thereby move the movable section **106** with respect to the first and second fixed sections **102**, **104**, as desired. In embodiments, either of the first prime mover **124** connected between the movable section **106** and the first fixed section **102** and the second prime mover **124** connected between the movable section **106** and the second fixed section **104** may be omitted. In embodiments, a single prime mover **124** may be connected between the movable section **106** and both of the first and second fixed sections **102**, **104**

[0048] The prime mover **124** is shown as an electrically-operated, screw-type telescopic actuator powered by an electrical system (not shown) provided with the pontoon boat **10** for powering electrical loads on the pontoon boat **10**. In embodiments, the prime mover **124** may be any other form of telescopic actuator, for example without limitation, an electro-hydraulic or electro-pneumatic piston-and-cylinder assembly. In embodiments, the prime mover **124** may be a motor-driven rack and pinion assembly, a powered cable mechanism, or any other prime mover capable of exerting a force on the movable section **106** to thereby move the movable section **106** with respect to the first and second fixed sections **102**, **104**.

[0049] Embodiments including a power-operated movable section **106** may further include a control system (not shown) for operating the prime mover(s) **124** and thereby extending and retracting the movable section **106**. The control system (not shown) may include a control switch (not shown) proximate one or more of the helm **30** and the slide-out compartment **100**, the control switch (not shown) being operable to control operation of the prime mover **124** and thereby control extension and retraction of the movable section **106**. The control system (not shown) also may include an interlock to preclude moving the pontoon boat **10** under power while the movable section **106** is not in the first position, that is when the movable section **106** is fully or partially extended to or toward the second position. To this end, the control system (not shown) may include one or more position sensors (not shown) configured to detect whether the movable section **106** is or is not in the first position, as would be understood by one skilled in the art. In embodiments including slide-out compartments on opposite sides of the pontoon boat (for example, without limitation, the first slide-out compartment **100** and the second slide-out compartment **100'** as shown), the control system (not shown) may be, but need not be, configured to extend and retract corresponding pairs of such slide-out compartments simultaneously to better maintain side-to-side stability and balance of the pontoon boat **10**.

[0050] The movable section **106** may, but need not, include a bench **200**. As shown, the movable section **106** includes a bench **200**, and the bench **200** is convertible between a first (or deployed) configuration and a second (or stowed) configuration. In the deployed configuration, the bench **200** provides a seating unit. With the bench **200** in the stowed configuration, the slide-out compartment **100** may take the form of an open platform, for example, a fishing platform or a balcony. The bench **200** may be converted between the first and second configurations regardless of whether the movable section **106** is in the first position or the second position. In embodiments, the bench **200** could be fixed, that is, not convertible as described herein.

[0051] As shown, the bench **200** includes a seat **202**, a backrest **204**, and a kick **206**. The seat **202** has an inboard end facing inboard I, and an outboard end facing outboard O. Each of the backrest **204** and the kick **206** has an inboard surface facing inboard I and an outboard surface facing outboard O. The kick **206** may, but need not, function as a leg supporting the inboard end of the seat **202** when the bench **200** is in the deployed configuration. In embodiments, one or both of the backrest **204** and the kick **206** may be omitted. In the illustrated embodiment, the backrest **204** functions as a portion of the passenger barrier **22**. If the backrest **204** is omitted, another structure (not shown) may be provided in its place or thereabouts to function as the portion of the passenger barrier **22**. In embodiments, the bench **200** may further include arm rests or bolsters (not shown). Each of the seat **202**, the backrest **204**, and the kick **206** may be, but need not be, cushioned. Also, each of the seat **202**, the backrest **204**, and the kick **206** may be provided in one piece or in two or more sections.

[0052] The seat **202** may be pivotably connected proximate the outboard end thereof to the backrest **204** proximate a lower end thereof (as shown in the drawings) or otherwise to the movable section **106** so that the seat **202** may be pivoted between a seating position in which the seat is generally parallel to the deck **20** and generally perpendicular to the backrest **204**, and a stowed position in which an upper surface of the seat **202** faces the inboard surface of the backrest **204** and is generally parallel to the backrest **204** and/or generally perpendicular to the deck **20**. Similarly, the kick **206** may be pivotably connected proximate an upper end thereof to the seat **202** proximate the inboard end thereof so that the kick **206** may pivoted between a first position generally perpendicular to the seat **202** and a second position generally parallel to and adjacent the seat **202**. The foregoing pivotable connections may be effected using any suitable form of hinge (not shown), as would be understood by one skilled in the art.

[0053] It is apparent from the drawings that the bench **200** occludes a portion of the floor of the movable section **106** when the bench **200** is in the deployed configuration, and that the foregoing portion of the floor of the movable section **106** is exposed and usable by a passenger when the bench **200** is in the stowed configuration.

[0054] The embodiments shown and described herein are illustrative and not limiting. Those skilled in the art would understand how to modify the disclosed embodiments without departing from the scope of the appended claims.

1. A pontoon boat comprising:

a first pontoon;

a second pontoon;

a frame connected to and supported by the first and second pontoons;

a deck supported by the frame, the deck defining an interior region of the pontoon boat; and

a slide-out compartment, the slide-out compartment comprising:

a first fixed section attached to the frame;

a second fixed section attached to the frame; and

a movable section slidingly supported by the first and second fixed sections,

wherein the movable section is selectively movable between a first position in which the movable section is disposed relatively near the interior region of the pontoon boat and substantially between the first and second fixed sections, and a second position in which the movable section is disposed relatively far from the interior region of the pontoon boat and is at least partially outboard of the first and second fixed sections.

2. The pontoon boat of claim **1**, wherein the slide-out compartment further comprises:

a first slide mechanism connected between the first fixed section and the movable section second; and

a second slide mechanism connected between the second fixed section and the movable section.

3. The pontoon boat of claim 1, wherein the first slide mechanism comprises a fixed rail connected to the first fixed section and a movable rail connected to the movable section.

4. The pontoon boat of claim 1, wherein the slide-out compartment further comprises:

a travel limiter configured to limit travel of the movable section with respect to the first fixed section in at least one of a direction toward the interior region of the pontoon boat and a direction away from the interior region of the pontoon boat.

5. The pontoon boat of claim 4, wherein the travel limiter comprises:

a first stop block connected to one of the first fixed section and the movable section; and

a stop arm connected to the other of the first fixed section and the movable section.

6. The pontoon boat of claim 5, wherein the travel limiter further comprises:

a second stop block connected to one of the first fixed section and the movable section.

7. The pontoon boat of claim 1 further comprising a travel lock configured to inhibit movement of the movable section with respect to the first fixed section.

8. The pontoon boat of claim 1, wherein the slide-out compartment further comprises:

a prime mover connected between the movable section and one of the first fixed section and the second fixed section.

9. The pontoon boat of claim 8, wherein the prime mover further is connected between the movable section and the other of the first fixed section and the second fixed section.

10. The pontoon boat of claim 8, wherein the slide-out compartment further comprises:

a second prime mover connected between the movable section and the other of the first fixed section and the second fixed section.

11. The pontoon boat of claim 8 wherein the prime mover is a telescopic actuator.

12. The pontoon boat of claim 8, further comprising a control system configured to control operation of the prime mover.

13. The pontoon boat of claim 12, wherein the control system comprises an interlock configured to inhibit operation of the pontoon boat under power if the movable section is not in the first position.

14. The pontoon boat of claim 1, wherein the movable section occludes a portion of the deck when the movable section is in the first position, and wherein the movable section does not occlude the portion of the deck when the movable section is in the second position.

15. The pontoon boat of claim 1, wherein the movable section comprises a floor, wherein the floor occludes a portion of the deck when the movable section is in the first position, and wherein the floor does not occlude the portion of the deck when the movable section is in the second position.

16. The pontoon boat of claim 1 wherein the movable section comprises a bench.

17. The pontoon boat of claim 16 wherein the bench is convertible between a deployed configuration and a stowed configuration.

18. The pontoon boat of claim 17,

wherein the bench comprises a seat, a backrest, and a kick,

wherein the seat is pivotable with respect to the backrest between a seating orientation in which the seat is generally perpendicular to the backrest and a stowed orientation in which the seat is generally parallel to the backrest, and

wherein the kick is pivotable with respect to the seat between a first position in which the kick is generally perpendicular to the seat and a second position in which the kick is generally parallel to the seat.

19. A pontoon boat comprising:

a first pontoon;

a second pontoon;

a frame connected to and supported by the first and second pontoons;

a deck supported by the frame, the deck defining an interior region of the pontoon boat, and

a slide-out compartment, the slide-out compartment comprising:

a first fixed section supported by the frame;

a second fixed section supported by the frame; and

a movable section slidingly supported by the first and second fixed sections,

wherein the movable section is selectively movable between a first position in which the movable section is disposed relatively near the interior region of the pontoon boat, and a second position in which the movable section is disposed relatively far from the interior region of the pontoon boat,

wherein the movable section comprises a floor, wherein the floor occludes a portion of the deck when the movable section is in the first position, and wherein the floor does not occlude the portion of the deck when the movable section is in the second position,

wherein the movable section further comprises a bench,

wherein the bench is convertible between a deployed configuration and a stowed configuration,

wherein the bench comprises a seat, a backrest, and a kick,

wherein the seat is pivotable with respect to the backrest between a seating orientation in which the seat is generally perpendicular to the backrest and a stowed orientation in which the seat is generally parallel to the backrest, and

wherein the kick is pivotable with respect to the seat between a first position in which the kick is generally perpendicular to the seat and a second position in which the kick is generally parallel to the seat.

20. The pontoon boat of claim 19, wherein the seat occludes a portion of the floor when the convertible bench is in the first position and wherein the sat does not occlude the portion of the floor when the convertible bench is in the second position.

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