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REDUCED LENGTH CROSSBOW

Abstract

A crossbow including a center rail including a bottom portion, a proximal end, and a distal end positioned opposite the proximal end, the center rail at least partially defining a crossbow length and a midpoint plane intersecting a horizontal midpoint of the crossbow, a riser extending horizontally from the distal end, one or more limbs coupled to the riser, and a trigger extending from the bottom portion of the center rail and positioned within ten percent of the crossbow length from the midpoint plane.

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Background/Summary

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED PATENT APPLICATIONS [0001] This application is a Continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 17/883,442, filed Aug. 8, 2022, which is a Continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/281,239, filed Feb. 21, 2019, which is a Continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/909,872, filed Mar. 1, 2018, now U.S. Pat. No. 10,254,075, which is a Continuation-In-Part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/782,238, filed Oct. 12, 2017, now U.S. Pat. No. 10,175,023, which is a Continuation-In-Part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/673,784, filed Aug. 10, 2017, which is a Continuation-In-Part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/433,769, filed Feb. 15, 2017, now U.S. Pat. No. 10,126,088, which is a Continuation-In-Part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/294,993, filed Oct. 17, 2016, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,879,936, which is a Continuation-In-Part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/098,537, filed Apr. 14, 2016, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,494,379, which claims priority from U.S. Provisional Application No. 62,244,932, filed Oct. 22, 2015, and is a Continuation-In-Part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/107,058, filed Dec. 16, 2013, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,354,015. All of these applications are incorporated by reference herein in their entireties.

BACKGROUND
[0002] Bows have been used for many years as a weapon for hunting and target shooting. More advanced bows include cams that increase the mechanical advantage associated with the draw of the bowstring. The cams are configured to yield a decrease in draw force near full draw. Such cams preferably use power cables that load the bow limbs. Power cables can also be used to synchronize rotation of the cams, such as disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 7,305,979 (Yehle).
[0003] With conventional bows and crossbows the draw string is typically pulled away from the generally concave area between the limbs and away from the riser and limbs. This design limits the power stroke for bows and crossbows.
[0004] In order to increase the power stroke, the draw string can be positioned on the down-range side of the string guides so that the draw string unrolls between the string guides toward the user as the bow is drawn, such as illustrated in U.S. Pat. No. 7,836,871 (Kempf) and U.S. Pat. No. 7,328,693 (Kempf). One drawback of this configuration is that the power cables can limit the

rotation of the cams to about 270 degrees. In order to increase the length of the power stroke, the diameter of the pulleys needs to be increased. Increasing the size of the pulleys results in a larger and less usable bow.

[0005] FIGS. **1-3** illustrate a string guide system for a bow that includes power cables **20**A, **20**B ("**20**") attached to respective string guides **22**A, **22**B ("**22**") at first attachment points **24**A, **24**B ("**24**"). The second ends **26**A, **26**B ("**26**") of the power cables **20** are attached to the axles **28**A, **28**B ("**28**") of the opposite string guides **22**. Draw string **30** engages down-range edges **46**A, **46**B of string guides **22** and is attached at draw string attachment points **44**A, **44**B ("**44**")

[0006] As the draw string **30** is moved from released configuration **32** of FIG. **1** to drawn configuration **34** of FIGS. **2** and **3**, the string guides **22** counter-rotate toward each other about 270 degrees. The draw string **30** unwinds between the string guides **22** from opposing cam journals **48**A, **48**B ("**48**") in what is referred to as a reverse draw configuration. As the first attachment points **24** rotate in direction **36**, the power cables **20** are wrapped around respective power cable take-up journal of the string guides **22**, which in turn bends the limbs toward each other to store the energy needed for the bow to fire the arrow.

[0007] Further rotation of the string guides **22** in the direction **36** causes the power cables **20** to contact the power cable take-up journal, stopping rotation of the cam, The first attachment points **24** may also contact the power cables **20** at the locations **38**A, **38**B ("**38**"), preventing further rotation in the direction **36**. As a result, rotation of the string guides **22** is limited to about 270 degrees, reducing the length **40** of the power stroke.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] One aspect of the present disclosure relates to a crossbow. The crossbow includes a center rail including a bottom portion, a proximal end, and a distal end positioned opposite the proximal end, the center rail at least partially defining a crossbow length and a midpoint plane intersecting a horizontal midpoint of the crossbow, a riser extending horizontally from the distal end, one or more limbs coupled to the riser, and a trigger extending from the bottom portion of the center rail and positioned within ten percent of the crossbow length from the midpoint plane.

[0009] Another aspect of the present disclosure relates to a crossbow. The crossbow includes a drawstring movable between a drawn configuration and a released configuration, a center rail including a bottom portion, a proximal end, and a distal end positioned opposite the proximal end, the center rail at least partially defining a crossbow length and a midpoint plane intersecting a horizontal midpoint of the crossbow, a riser extending horizontally from the distal end and including one or more limbs flexibly repositionable towards the proximal end when the drawstring is in the drawn configuration, and a trigger extending from the bottom portion of the center rail and configured to control actuation of a bowstring catch. At least a portion of the drawstring converges with the midpoint plane when the drawstring is in the drawn configuration.

[0010] Another aspect of the present disclosure relates to a crossbow. The crossbow includes a drawstring repositionable between a drawn configuration and a released configuration, a center rail including a bottom portion, a proximal end, a distal end positioned opposite the proximal end, the center rail at least partially defining a midpoint plane intersecting a horizontal midpoint of the crossbow, a bowstring catch coupled to the center rail between the midpoint plane and the proximal end, and a trigger extending from the bottom portion of the center rail and configured to control actuation of the bowstring catch via an elongated member, the trigger positioned forward the bowstring catch.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] FIG. **1** is a bottom view of a prior art string guide system for a bow in a released

configuration.
[0012] FIG. **2** is a bottom view of the string guide system of FIG. **1** in a drawn configuration.
[0013] FIG. **3** is a perspective view of the string guide system of FIG. **1** in a drawn configuration.
[0014] FIG. **4** is a bottom view of a string guide system for a bow with a helical take-up journal in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0015] FIG. **5** is a bottom view of the string guide system of FIG. **4** in a drawn configuration.
[0016] FIG. **6** is a perspective view of the string guide system of FIG. **4** in a drawn configuration.
[0017] FIG. **7** is an enlarged view of the left string guide of the string guide system of FIG. **4**.
[0018] FIG. **8** is an enlarged view of the right string guide of the string guide system of FIG. **4**.
[0019] FIG. **9**A is an enlarged view of a power cable take-up journal sized to receive two full wraps of the power cable in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0020] FIG. **9**B is an enlarged view of a power cable take-up journal and draw string journal sized to receive two full wraps of the power cable and draw string in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0021] FIG. **9**C is an enlarged view of an elongated power cable take-up journal in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0022] FIG. **10** is a schematic illustration of a bow with a string guide system in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0023] FIG. **11** is a schematic illustration of an alternate bow with a string guide system in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0024] FIG. **12** is a schematic illustration of an alternate dual-cam bow with a string guide system in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0025] FIGS. **13**A and **13**B are top and side views of a crossbow with helical power cable journals in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0026] FIG. **14**A is an enlarged top view of the crossbow of FIG. **13**A
[0027] FIG. **14**B is an enlarged bottom view of the crossbow of FIG. **13**A
[0028] FIG. **14**C illustrates an arrow rest in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0029] FIGS. **14**D and **14**E illustrate the cocking handle for the crossbow of FIG. **13**A FIGS. **14**F and **14**G illustrate the quiver for the crossbow of FIG. **13**A.
[0030] FIG. **15** is a front view of the crossbow of FIG. **13**A
[0031] FIGS. **16**A and **16**B are top and bottom views of cams with helical power cable journals in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0032] FIGS. **17**A and **17**B are opposite side view of a trigger assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0033] FIG. **17**C is a side view of the trigger of FIG. **17**A with a bolt engaged with the draw string in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0034] FIG. **17**D is a perspective view of a low friction interface at a rear edge of a string catch in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0035] FIGS. **18**A and **18**B illustrate operation of the trigger mechanism in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0036] FIGS. **19** and **20** illustrate a cocking mechanism for a crossbow in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0037] FIGS. **21**A and **21**B illustrate a crossbow in a release configuration in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0038] FIGS. **22**A and **22**B illustrate the cams of the crossbow of FIGS. **21**A and **21**B in the release configuration.
[0039] FIGS. **23**A and **23**B illustrate the crossbow of FIGS. **21**A and **21**B m a drawn configuration in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.
[0040] FIGS. **24**A, **24**B, and **24**C illustrate the cams of the crossbow of FIGS. **23**A and **23**B in the

drawn configuration.

[0041] FIGS. **25**A and **25**B illustrate an alternate trigger assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0042] FIG. **25**C is a front view of an alternate string carrier for the crossbow in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0043] FIGS. **25**D-**25** F are various view of a nock for use in an arrow assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0044] FIG. **25**G is an exploded view of an arrow assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0045] FIG. **25**H is a perspective view of a lighted nock assembly suitable for use with an arrow assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0046] FIGS. **26**A and **26**B illustrate an alternate cocking handle in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0047] FIGS. **27**A-**27**D illustrate an alternate tunable arrow rest for a crossbow in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0048] FIGS. **28**A-**28**F illustrate alternate cocking systems for a crossbow in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0049] FIG. **29** illustrates capture of the string carrier in the center rail illustrated in FIG. **13**B.

[0050] FIGS. **30**A-**30**E illustrate an alternate cocking system in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0051] FIG. **31**A-**31**C are perspective, side, and top views of a reduced length crossbow in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0052] FIG. **32** is a sectional view of a trigger system for the reduced length crossbow of FIGS. **31**A-C.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0053] FIG. **4** illustrates a string guide system **90** for a bow with a reverse draw configuration **92** in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. Power cables **102**A, **102**B ("**102**") are attached to respective string guides **104**A, **104**B ("**104**") at first attachment points **106***r*A, **106**B ("**106**"). Second ends **108**A, **108**B ("**108**") of the power cables **102** are attached to axles **110**A, **110**B ("**110**") of the opposite string guides **104**. In the illustrated embodiment, the power cables **102** wrap around power cable take-ups **112**A, **112**B ("**112**") located on the respective cam assembles **104** when in the released configuration **116** of FIG. **4**.

[0054] In the reverse draw configuration **92** the draw string **114** is located adjacent down-range side **94** of the string guide system **70** when in the released configuration **116**. In the released configuration **116** of FIG. **4**, the distance between the axles **110** may be in the range of less than about 16 inches to less than about 10 inches. In the drawn configuration **118**, the distance between the axles **110** may be in the range of about between about 6 inches to about 8 inches, and more preferably about 4 inches to about 8 inches. In one embodiment, the distance between the axles **110** in the drawn configuration **118** is less than about 6 inches, and alternatively, less than about 4 inches. In another embodiment, the distance between the axles **110** in the drawn configuration **118** is about 7 inches or less. Bowstring and draw string are used interchangeably herein to the primary string used to launch arrows.

[0055] As illustrated in FIGS. **5** and **6**, the draw string **114** translates from the down-range side **94** toward the up-range side **96** and unwinds between the first and second string guides **104** in a drawn configuration **118**. In the illustrated embodiment, the string guides **104** counter-rotate toward each other in directions **120** more than 360 degrees as the draw string **114** unwinds between the string guides **104** from opposing cam journals **130**A, **130**B ("**130**").

[0056] The string guides **104** each include one or more grooves, channels or journals located between two flanges around at least a portion of its circumference that guides a flexible member, such as a rope, string, belt, chain, and the like. The string guides can be cams or pulleys with a variety of round and non-round shapes. The axis of rotation can be located concentrically or eccentrically relative to the string guides. The power cables and draw strings can be any elongated flexible member, such as woven and non-woven filaments of synthetic or natural materials, cables, belts, chains, and the like.

[0057] As the first attachment points **106** rotate m direction **120**, the power cables **102** are wrapped onto cams **126**A, **126**B (“**126**”) with helical journals **122**A, **122**B (“**122**”), preferably located at the respective axles **110**. The helical journals **122** take up excess slack in the power cables **102** resulting from the string guides **104** moving toward each other in direction **124** as the axles **110** move toward each other.

[0058] The helical journals **122** serve to displace the power cables **102** away from the string guides **104**, so the first attachment points **106** do not contact the power cables **102** while the bow is being drawn (see FIGS. **7** and **8**). As a result, rotation of the string guides **104** is limited only by the length of the draw string journals **130**A, **103**B (“**130**”). For example, the draw string journals **130** can also be helically in nature, wrapping around the axles **110** more than 360 degrees.

[0059] As a result, the power stroke **132** is extended. In the illustrated embodiment, the power stroke **132** can be increased by at least 25%, and preferably by 40% or more, without changing the diameter of the string guides **104**. The power stroke **132** can be in the range of about 8 inches to about 20 inches. The present disclosure permits crossbows that generate kinetic energy of greater than 70 ft.-lbs. of energy with a power stroke of about 8 inches to about 15 inches. In another embodiment, the present disclosure permits a crossbow that generates kinetic energy of greater than 125 ft.-lbs. of energy with a power stroke of about 10 inches to about 15 inches.

[0060] In some embodiments, the geometric profiles of the draw string journals **130** and the helical journals **122** contribute to let-off at full draw. A more detailed discussion of cams suitable for use in bows is provided in U.S. Pat. No. 7,305,979 (Yehle), which is hereby incorporated by reference. In another embodiment the crossbow is designed so the draw weight increases continuously to full draw. In particular, the slope of the power curve (draw force vs displacement) is positive as the draw string moves from the released configuration to the drawn configuration.

[0061] FIGS. **7** and **8** are enlarged views of the string guides **104**A, **104**B, respectively, with the draw string **114** in the drawn configuration **118**. The helical journals **122** have a length corresponding generally to one full wrap of the power cables **102**. The axes of rotation **146**A, **146**B (“**146**”) of the first and second helical journals **122** preferably extend generally perpendicular to a plane of rotation of the first and second string guides **104**. The helical journals **122** displace the power cables **102** away from the draw string **114** as the bow is drawn from the released configuration **116** to the drawn configuration **118**. Height **140** of the helical journals **122** raises the power cables **102** above top surface **142** of the string guides **104**. The resulting gap **144** permits the first attachment points **106** and the power cable take-ups **112** to pass freely under the power cables **102**. The length of the helical journals **122** can be increased or decreased to optimize draw force versus draw distance for the bow and let-off. The axes of rotation **146** of the helical journals **122** are preferably co-linear with axes **110** of rotation for the string guides **104**.

[0062] FIG. **9**A illustrates an alternate string guide **200** in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. Power cable take ups **202** have helical journals **204** that permit the power cables **102** to wrap around about two full turns or about 720 degrees. The extended power cable take-up **202** increases the gap **206** between the power cables **102** and top surface **208** of the string guide **200** and provides excess capacity to accommodate more than 360 degrees of rotation of the string guides **200**.

[0063] FIG. **9**B illustrates an alternate string guide **250** in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. The draw string journals **252** and the power cable journals **254** are both helical structures designed so that the draw string **114** and the power cables **102** can wrap two full turns around the string guide **250**.

[0064] FIG. **9**C illustrates an alternate string guide **270** with a smooth power cable take-up **272** in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. The power cable take-up **272** has a surface **274** with a height **276** at least twice a diameter **278** of the power cable **102**. In another embodiment, the surface **274** has a height **276** at least three times the diameter **278** of the power cable **102**. Biasing force **280**, such as from a cable guard located on the bow shifts the power cables **102** along the surface **274** away from top surface **282** of the string guide **270** when in the drawn configuration **284**.

[0065] FIG. **10** is a schematic illustration of bow **150** with a string guide system **152** in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. Bow limbs **1541**\, **154**B ("**154**") extend oppositely from riser **156**. String guides **1581**\, **158**B ("**158**") are rotatably mounted, typically eccentrically, on respective limbs **154**A, **154**B on respective axles **160**A, **160**B ("**160**") in a reverse draw configuration **174**.

[0066] Draw string **162** is received in respective draw string journals (see e.g., FIGS. **7** and **8**) and secured at each end to the string guides **158** at locations **164**A, **164**B. When the bow is in the released configuration **176** illustrated in FIG. **10**, the draw string **162** is located adjacent the down-range side **178** of the bow **150**. When the bow **150** is drawn, the draw string **162** unwinds from the draw string journals toward the up-range side **180** of the bow **150**, thereby rotating the string guides **158** in direction **166**.

[0067] First power cable **168**A is secured to the first string guide **158**A at first attachment point **170**A and engages with a power cable take-up with a helical journal **172**A (see FIGS. **7** and **8**) as the bow **150** is drawn. As the string guide **158**A rotates in the direction **166**, the power cable **168**A is taken up by the cam **172**A. The other end of the first power cable **168**A is secured to the axle **160**B.

[0068] Second power cable **168**B is secured to the second string guide **158**B at first attachment point **170**B and engages with a power cable take-up with a helical journal **172**B (see FIGS. **7** and **8**) as the bow **150** is drawn. As the string guide **158**B rotates, the power cable **168**B is taken up by the cam **172**B. The other end of the second power cable **168**B is secured to the axle **160**A. Alternatively, the other ends of the first and second power cables **168** can be attached to the riser **156** or an extension thereof: such as the pylons **32** illustrated in commonly assigned U.S. Pat. No. 8,899,217 (Islas) and U.S. Pat. No. 8,651,095 (Islas), which are hereby incorporated by reference. Any of the power cable configurations illustrated herein can be used with the bow **150** illustrated in FIG. **10**. The power cable take-ups **172** are arranged so that as the bow **150** is drawn, the bow limbs **154** are drawn toward one another.

[0069] FIG. **11** is a schematic illustration of a crossbow **300** with a reverse draw configuration **302** in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. The crossbow **300** includes a center portion **304** with down-range side **306** and up-range side **308**. In the illustrated embodiment, the center portion **304** includes riser **310**. First and second flexible limbs **312**A, **312**B ("**312**") are attached to the riser **310** and extend from opposite sides of the center portion **304**.

[0070] Draw string **314** extends between first and second string guides **316**A, **316**B ("**316**"). In the illustrated embodiment, the string guide **316**A is substantially as shown in FIGS. **4-8**, while the string guide **316**B is a conventional pulley.

[0071] The first string guide **316**A is mounted to the first bow limb **312**A and is rotatable around a first axis **318**A. The first string guide **316**A includes a first draw string journal **320**A and a first power cable take-up journal **322**A, both of which are oriented generally perpendicular to the first axis **318**A. (See e.g., FIG. **8**). The first power cable take-up journal **322**A includes a width measured along the first axis **318**A that is at least twice a width of power cable **324**.

[0072] The second string guide **316**B is mounted to the second bow limb **312**A and rotatable around a second axis **318**B. The second string guide **316**B includes a second draw string journal **320**B oriented generally perpendicular to the second axis **318**B.

[0073] The draw string **314** is received in the first and second draw string journals **320**A, **320**B and is secured to the first string guide **316**A at first attachment point **324**. The draw string extends adjacent to the down range side **306** to the second string guide **316**B, wraps around the second string guide **316**B, and is attached at the first axis **318**A.

[0074] Power cable **324** is attached to the string guide **316**A at attachment point **326**. See FIG. **4**. Opposite end of the power cable **324** is attached to the axis **318**B. In the illustrated embodiment, power cable wraps **324** onto the first power cable take-up journal **322**A and translates along the first power cable take-up journal **322**A away from the first draw string journal **320**A as the bow **300** is drawn from the released configuration **328** to the dralvvn configuration (see FIGS. **5-8**).

[0075] FIG. **12** is a schematic illustration of a dual-cam crossbow **350** with a reverse draw configuration **352** in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. The crossbow **350** includes a center portion **354** with down-range side **356** and up-range side **358**. First and second flexible limbs **362**A, **362**B ("'**362**") are attached to riser **360** and extend from opposite sides of the center portion **354**. Draw string **364** extends between first and second string guides **366**A, **366**B ("**366**"). In the illustrated embodiment, the string guides **366** are substantially as shown in FIGS. **4-8**.

[0076] The string guides **366** are mounted to the bow limb **362** and are rotatable around first and second axis **368**A, **368**B ("**368**"), respectively. The string guides **366** include first and second draw string journals **370**A, **370**B ("**370**") and first and second power cable take-up journals **372**A, **372**B ("**372**"), both of which are oriented generally perpendicular to the axes **368**, respectively. (See e.g., FIG. **8**). The power cable take-up journals **372** include widths measured along the axes **368** that is at least twice a width of polvver cables **374**A, **374**B ("**374**").

[0077] The draw string **364** is received in the draw string journals **370** and is secured to the string guides **316** at first and second attachment points **375**A, **375**B ("**325**").

[0078] Power cables **374** are attached to the string guides **316** at attachment points **376**A, **376**B ("**376**"). See FIG. **4**. Opposite ends **380**A, **380**B ("**380**") of the power cables **374** are attached to anchors **378**A, **378**B ("**378**") on the center portion **354**. The power cables **374** preferably do not cross over the center support **354**.

[0079] In the illustrated embodiment, power cables wrap **374** onto the power cable take-up journal **372** and translates along the power cable take-up journals **372** away from the draw string journals **370** as the bow **350** is drawn from the released configuration **378** to the drawn configuration (see FIGS. **5-8**).

[0080] The string guides disclosed herein can be used with a variety of bows and crossbows, including those disclosed in commonly assigned U.S. Pat. No. 9,255,753, entitled Energy Storage Device for a Bow, filed Mar. 13, 2013 and U.S. Pat. No. 9,383,159, entitled De-Cocking Mechanism for a Bow, filed Nov. 5, 2013, both of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

[0081] FIGS. **13**A and **13**B illustrate an alternate crossbow **400** in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. The crossbow **400** includes a center rail **402** with a riser **404** mounted at the distal end **406** and a stock **408** located at the proximal end **410**. The arrow **416** is suspended above the rail **402** before firing. In one embodiment, the central rail **402** and the riser **404** may be a unitary structure, such as, for example, a molded carbon fiber component. In the illustrated embodiment, the stock **408** includes a scope mount **412** with a tactical, picatinny, or weaver mounting rail. Scope **414** preferably includes a reticle with gradations corresponding to the ballistic drop of bolts **416** of particular weight. The riser **404** includes a pair of limbs **420**A, **420**B {"**420**") extending rearward toward the proximal end **410**. In the illustrate embodiment, the limbs **420** have a generally concave shape directed toward the center rail **402**. The terms "'bolt" and "arrow" are both used for the projectiles launch by crossbows and are used interchangeable herein. Various arrows and nocks are disclosed in commonly assigned U.S. patent Ser. No. 15/673,784 entitled Arrow Assembly for a Crossbow and Methods of Using Same, filed Aug. 10, 2017, which is hereby incorporated by reference.

[0082] Draw string **501** is retracted to the drawn configuration **405** shown in FIGS. **13**A and **13**B using string carrier **480**. As will be discussed herein, the string carrier **480** slides along the center rail **402** toward the riser **404** to engage the draw string **501** while it is in a released configuration (see e.g., FIG. **21**A). That is, the string carrier **480** is captured by the center rail **402** and moves in a single degree of freedom along a Y-axis. The engagement of the string carrier **480** with the rail **402** (see e.g., FIG. **28**E) substantially prevents the string carrier **480** from moving in the other five degrees of freedom (X-axis, z axis, pitch, roll, or yaw) relative to the center rail **402** and the riser **404**. As used herein, “captured” refers to a string carrier that cannot be removed from the center rail without disassembling the crossbow or the string carrier.

[0083] When in the drawn configuration **405** tension forces **409**A, **409**B on the draw string **501** on opposite sides of the string carrier **480** are substantially the same, resulting in increased accuracy. In one embodiment, tension force **409**A is the same as tension force **409**B within less than about 1.0%, and more preferably less than about 0.5%, and most preferably less than about 0.1%. Consequently, cocking and firing the crossbow **400** is highly repeatable. To the extent that manufacturing variability creates inaccuracy in the crossbow **400**, any such inaccuracy are likewise highly repeatable, which can be compensated for with appropriate windage and elevation adjustments in the scope **414** (See FIG. **13**B). The repeatability provided by the present string carrier **480** results in a highly accurate crossbow **400** at distances beyond the capabilities of prior art crossbows.

[0084] By contrast, conventional cocking ropes, cocking sleds and hand-cocking techniques lack the repeatability of the present string carrier **480**, resulting in reduced accuracy. Windage and elevation adjustments cannot adequately compensate for random variability introduced by prior art cocking mechanism.

[0085] A cocking mechanism **484** (see e.g., FIGS. **18**A and **18**B) retracts the string carrier **480** to the retracted position illustrated in FIG. **13**B. The crossbow **400** includes a positive stop (e.g., the stock **408**) for the string carrier **480** that prevents the draw string **501** from being retracted beyond the dralvvn configuration **405**.

[0086] In the drawn configuration **405** the distance **407** between the cam axles may be in the range of about between about 6 inches to about 8 inches, and more preferably about 4 inches to about 8 inches. In one embodiment, the distance **407** between the axles in the drawn configuration **405** is less than about 6 inches, and alternatively, less than about 4 inches.

[0087] When in the drawn configuration **405** illustrated in FIG. **13**A (and the retracted position discussed herein) the narrow separation **407** between the cam axels results in a correspondingly small included angle **403** of the draw string **501**. The included angle **403** is the angle defined by the draw string **501** on either side of the string carrier **480** when in the drawing configuration **405**. The included angle **403** is preferably less than about 25 degrees, and more preferably less than about 20 degrees. The included angle **403** is typically between about 15 degrees to about 25 degrees. The present string carrier **480** includes a catch **502** (see e.g., FIG. **17**A) that engages a narrow segment of the draw string **501** that permits the present small included angle **403**.

[0088] The small included angle **403** that results from the narrow separation **407** does not provide sufficient space to accommodate conventional cocking mechanisms, such as cocking ropes and cocking sleds disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,095,128 (Bednar); U.S. Pat. No. 6,874,491 (Bednar); U.S. Pat. No. 8,573,192 (Bednar et al.); U.S. Pat. No. 9,335,115 (Bednar et al.); and 2015/0013654 (Bednar et al.), which are hereby incorporated by reference. It will be appreciated that the cocking systems disclosed herein are applicable to any type of crossbow, including recurved crossbows that do not include cams (such as disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 7,753,041 (Ogawa) and U.S. Pat. No. 7,748,370 (Choma), which are hereby incorporated by reference) or conventional compound crossbows with power cables that crossover.

[0089] FIGS. **14**A and **14**B are top and bottom views of the riser **404**. Limbs **420** are attached to the riser **404** near the distal end **406** by mounting brackets **422**A **422**B {“**422**”). In the illustrated embodiment, distal ends **424**A **424**B (“**424**”) of the limbs **420** extend past the mounting brackets **422** to create pocket **426** that contains arrowhead **428**. Bumpers **430** are preferably attached to the distal ends **424** of the limbs **420**. The tip of the arrowhead **428** is preferably completely contained within the pocket **426**.

[0090] Pivots **432**A, **432**B ("**432**") attached to the riser **404** engage with the limbs **420** proximally from the mounting brackets **422**. The pivots **432** provide a flexure point for the limbs **420** when the crossbow **400** is in the drawn configuration,

[0091] Cams **440**A **440**B ("**440**") are attached to the limbs **420** by axle mounts **442**A **442**B ("**442**"). The cams **440** preferably have a maximum diameter **441** less than the power stroke (see e.g., FIG. **5**) divided by about 3.5 for a reverse draw configuration. For example, if the power stroke is about 13 inches, the maximum diameter **441** of the cams **440** is preferably less than about 3.7 inches. The cams **440** preferably have a maximum diameter **441** less than the power stroke (see e.g., FIG. **5**) divided by about 5.0 for a non-reverse draw configuration, For example, if the power stroke is about 13 inches, the maximum diameter **441** of the cams **440** is preferably less than about 2.6 inches. The cams **440** preferably have a maximum diameter of less than about 4.0 inches, and more preferably less than about 3.5 inches. A highly compact crossbow with an included angle of less than about 25 degrees preferably has cams with a maximum diameter of less than about 3.0 inches.

[0092] In the illustrated embodiment, the axle mounts **442** are attached to the limbs **420** offset a distance **446** from the proximal ends **444**A, **444**B ("**444**") of the limbs **420**. Due to their concave shape, greatest width **448** of the limbs **420** (in both the drawn configuration and the release configuration) preferably occurs at a location between the axle mounts **442** and the pivots **432**, not at the proximal ends **444**.

[0093] The offset **446** of the axle mounts **442** maximizes the speed of the limbs **420**, minimizes limb vibration, and maximizes energy transfer to the bolts **416**. In particular, the offset **446** is similar to hitting a baseball with. a baseball bat at a location offset from the tip of the bat, commonly referred to as the "′sweet spot". The size of the offset **446** is determined empirically for each type of limb. In the illustrated embodiment, the offset **446** is about 1.5 to about 4 inches, and more preferably about 2 to about 3 inches.

[0094] Tunable arrow rest **490** is positioned just behind the pocket **426**. A pair of supports **492** are secured near opposite sides of the bolt **416** by fasteners **494**. The supports **492** preferably slide in the plane of the limbs **420**. As best illustrated in FIG. **14**C, the separation **496** between the supports **492** can be adjusted to raise or lower front end of the bolt **416** relative to the draw string **501**. In particular, by increasing the separation **496** between the supports **492** the curved profile of the front end of the bolt **416** is lowered relative to the string carrier **480** (see FIG. **17**A). Alternatively, by decreasing the separation **496** the curved profile of the bolt **416** is raised.

[0095] Various warning labels **890**, **892** are applied at various locations on the crossbow **400**. The warning labels **890**, **892** can be a variety of configurations, including pre-printed press sensitive labels on various substrates, laser priming, and the like. Another approach is to impregnate an anodized aluminum surface with a silver compound which, when exposed to a light source, creates an activated latent image. Development fixes the label inside the metal. Photosensitive anodized aluminum is then scaled in boiling water similarly to common anodized aluminum. For anodized and powder coated finishes on metals, such as aluminum, it is possible to directly print inks on the open-pore anodized aluminum surface to create digital, full-color warning labels that are subsequently sealed for high durability.

[0096] Another option is to create durable, multi-colored warning labels directly in the native oxide layer on anodized aluminum surfaces, without inks. The warning label is part of the aluminum oxide layer, and as such, cannot be easily removed or peeled-off creating warning labels directly in the native oxide layer on anodized aluminum is available from Deming Industries, Inc. of Coeur d′ Alene, ID.

[0097] FIG. **14**B illustrates the bottom of the riser **404**. Rail **450** on the riser **404** is used as the attachment point for accessories, such as quiver **452** for holding bolts **416** and cocking handle **454** that engages with pins **570** to rotate the drive shaft **564** (see FIG. **18**A).

[0098] FIG. **14**D illustrates the cocking handle **454** in greater detail. Distal end **700** is configured to engage with drive shaft **564** and pins **570** illustrated in FIG. **18**A. Center recess **702** receives the drive shaft **564** and the undercuts **704** engage with the pins **570** when the system is under tension. Consequently, when cocking or uncocking the crossbow **400** the tension in the system locks the pins **570** into the undercuts **704**. When tension in the system is removed, the cocking handle **454** can be rotated a few degrees and disengaged from the drive shaft **564**.

[0099] The distal end **700** includes stem **706** that extends into hollow handle **708**. Pins **710** permit the stem **706** to rotate a few degrees around pin **712** in either direction within the hollow handle **708**. As best illustrated in FIG. **14**E, torque assembly **714** is located in hollow handle **708** that resists rotation of the stem **706** until a pre-set torque is reached. Once that torque threshold is exceeded, the stem **706** breaks free of block **716** and rotates within the hollow handle **708**, generating an audible noise and snapping sensation that signal to the user that the crossbow **400** is fully cocked.

[0100] FIGS. **14**F and **14**G illustrate a mounting system **730** for the quiver **452** and the cocking handle **454**. Quiver spine **732** includes a pair of mounting posts **734** spaced to engage with openings **736** in. the mounting bracket **738**. Magazine catch **740** (see FIG. **14**G) slides within mounting bracket **738**. Spring **742** biases the magazine catch **740** in direction **744**. Openings **746** in the magazine catch **740** engage with undercuts **748** on the mounting posts **734** under pressure from the spring **742**. To remove the quiver **452** the user presses the handle **750** in direction **752** until the openings **746** in the magazine catch **740** are aligned with the openings **736** in the mounting bracket **738**. Once aligned, the mounting posts **734** can be removed from the mounting bracket **738**.

[0101] FIG. **15** is a front view of the crossbow **400** with the draw string or the power cables removed to better illustrate the cams **440** having upper and lower helical journals **460**A, **460**B above and below draw string journal **464**. As illustrated in FIG. **21**A, separate power cables **610**A, **610**B are operatively engaged with each of the helical journals **460**A, **460**B, and minimizing torque on the cams **440**. The draw string journal **464** defines plane **466** that passes through the bolt **416**. The helical journals **460**A, **460**B move the power cables **610**A, **610**B in directions **468**A, **468**B, respectively, away from the plane **466** as the bow **400** is drawn.

[0102] FIGS. **16**A and **16**B are upper and lower perspective views of the cams **440** with the power cables and draw string removed. Recess **470** contains draw string mount **472** located generally in the plane **466** of the draw string journal **464**. Power cable attachment **462**A and pivot post **463**A correspond to helical journal **460**A. As best illustrated in FIG. **16**B, power cable attachment **462**B and pivot post **463**B corresponds to the helical journal **460**B. The pivot pots **463** serve to take-up a portion of the power cables **610** and redirect the power cables **610** onto the helical journals **460**.

[0103] FIGS. **17**A through **17**D illustrate string carrier **480** for the crossbow **400** in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. As best illustrated in FIG. **21**A, the string carrier **480** slides along axis **482** of the center rail **402** to the location **483** (see FIG. **21**A) to capture the draw string **501**. After the string carrier **480** captures the draw string **501**, the cocking mechanism **484** (see FIGS. **18**A and **18**B) is used to return the string carrier **480** back to the position illustrated in FIGS. **17**A and **17**B at the proximal end **410** of the crossbow **400** and into engagement with trigger **558**. In the preferred embodiment, the draw string **501** travels above the center rail **402** as it moves between the release configuration **600** and the drawn configuration **405**. The draw string **501** preferably moves parallel to the top surface of the center rail **402**.

[0104] The string carrier **480** includes fingers **500** on catch **502** that engage the draw string **501**. The catch **502** is illustrated in a closed position **504**. After firing the crossbow. the catch **502** is retained in open position **505** (see FIG. **18**B), such as for example, by spring **510**. In the illustrated embodiment, the catch biasing force is applied to the catch **502** by spring **510** to rotate in direction **506** around pin **508** and retains the catch **502** in the open position **505**. Absent an external force, the catch **502** automatically move to open position **505** (see FIG. **18**B) and releases the draw string **501**. As used herein, “closed position” refers to any configuration that retains a draw string and “open position” refers to any configuration that releases the draw string.

[0105] In the closed position **504** illustrated in FIGS. **17**A, **17**B, **18**A, recess **512** on sear **514** engages low friction device **513** at rear edge of the catch **502** at interface **533** to retain the catch **502** in the closed position **504**. The sear **514** is biased in direction **516** by a sear biasing force applied by spring **511** to engage with and retain the catch **502** in the closed position **504**.

[0106] FIG. **17**D illustrates the string carrier **480** with the sear **514** removed for clarity. In the illustrated embodiment, the low friction device **513** is a roller pin **523** mounted in rear portion of the catch **520**. In one embodiment, the roller pin **523** has a diameter corresponding generally to the diameter of the recess **512**. The roller pin **523** is preferably supported by ball bearings **525** to reduce friction between the catch **502** and the recess **512**, when firing the crossbow **400**. A force necessary to overcome the friction at the interface **533** to release the catch **502** is preferably less than about 1 pound, substantially reducing the trigger pull weight. In an alternate embodiment, the positions of the roller pin **523** and the ball bearings **525** can be reversed so that the sear **514** engages directly on the ball bearings **525**. In another embodiment, the roller pin **523** or a low friction bearing structure can be location on the sear **514**.

[0107] In one embodiment, a force necessary to overcome the friction at the interface **533** to release the catch **502** is preferably less than the biasing force applied to the sear **514** by the spring **511**. This feature causes the sear **514** to return folly to the cocked position **524** in the event the trigger **558** is partially depressed, but then released before the catch **502** releases the draw string **501**.

[0108] In another embodiment, a force necessary to overcome the friction at the interface **533** to release the catch **502** is preferably less than about 3.2%, and more preferably less than about 1.61) of the draw force to retain the draw string **501** to the drawn configuration. The draw force can optionally be measured as the force on the flexible tension member **585** when the string carrier **480** is in the drawn position (See FIG. **18**A).

[0109] Turning back to FIGS. **17**A and **17**B, when in safe position **509** shoulder **520** on safety **522** retains the sear **514** in a cocked position **524** and the catch **502** in the closed position **504**. Safety button **530** is used to move the safety **522** in direction **532** from the safe position **509** illustrated in FIGS. **17**A and **17**B to free position **553** (see FIG. **18**B) with the shoulder **520** disengaged from the sear **514**.

[0110] A dry fire lockout biasing force is applied by spring **540** to bias dry fire lockout **542** toward the catch **502**. Distal end **544** of the dry fire lockout **542** engages the sear **514** in a lockout position **541** to prevent the sear **514** from releasing the catch **502**. One of skilled in the art will recognize that the dry fire lockout **542** indirectly prevents the catch **502** from moving to the open position, but could directly engage with the catch **502** to prevent release of the draw string **501**. Even if the safety **522** is disengaged from the sear **514**, the distal end **544** of the dry fire lockout **542** retains the sear **514** in the cocked position **524** to prevent the catch **502** from releasing the draw string **501**.

[0111] FIG. **17**C illustrates the string earner **480** with the catch **502** removed for clarity. Nock **417** of the bolt **416** is engaged with the dry fire lockout **542** and rotated it in the direction **546**. Distal end **544** of the dry fire lockout **542** is now in disengaged position **547** relative to the sear **514**. Once the safety **522** is removed from the safe position **509** using the safety button **530**, the crossbow **400** can be fired. In the illustrated embodiment, the nock **417** is a clip-on version that flexes to form a snap-fit engagement with the draw string **501**. Only when a bolt **416** is fully engaged with the draw string **501** will the dry fire. lockout **542** be in the disengaged position **547** that permits the sear **514** to release the catch **502**.

[0112] FIGS. **18**A and **18**B illustrate the relationship between the string earner **480**, the cocking mechanism **484**, and the trigger assembly **550** that form string control assembly **551**. The trigger assembly **550** is mounted in the stock **408**, separate from the string carrier **480**. Only when the string carrier **480** is fully retracted into the stock **408** is the trigger pawl **552** positioned adjacent to the sear **514**. When the user is ready to fire the crossbow **400**, the safety button **530** is moved in direction **532** to a free position **553** where the extension **515** is disengaged from the shoulder **520**. When the trigger **558** is depressed trigger linkage **559** rotates sear **514** in direction **517** to a de-cocked position **557** and the catch **502** moves to the open position **505** to release the draw string **501**.

[0113] As best illustrate in FIG. **18**B, after firing the crossbow the sear **514** is in a de-cocked position **557** and the safety **522** is in the free position **553**. The catch **502** retains the sear **514** in the de-cocked position **557** even though the spring **511** biases it toward the cocked position **524**. In the de-cocked position **557** the sear **514** retains the dry fire lockout **542** in the disengaged position **547** even though the spring **540** biases it toward the lockout position **541**. The extension **515** on the sear **514** is located in recess **521** on the safety **522**.

[0114] To cock the crossbow **400** again the string carrier **480** is moved forward to location **483** (see FIG. **21**A) into engagement with the draw string **501**. Lower edge **503** of the catch **502** engages the draw string **501** and overcomes the force of spring **510** to automatically push the catch **502** to the closed position **504** (See FIG. **18**A). Spring **511** automatically rotates the sear **514** back into the cocked position **524** so recess **512** formed interface **533** with the catch **502**. Rotation of the sear **514** causes the extension **515** to slide along the surface of the recess **521** until it engages with the shoulder **520** on the safety **522** in the safe position **509**. With the sear **514** back in the cocked position **524** (See FIG. **18**A), the spring **540** biases dry fire lockout **542** to the lockout position **541** so the distal end **544** engages the sear **514** to prevent the catch **502** from releasing the draw string **501** (See FIG. **18**A) until an arrow is inserted into the string carrier **480**. Consequently, when the string carrier **480** is pushed into engagement with the draw string **501**, the draw string **501** pushes the catch **502** from the open position **505** to the closed position **504** to automatically (i) couple the sear **514** with the catch **502** at the interface **533** to retain the catch **502** in the closed position **504**, (ii) move the safety **522** to the safe position **509** coupled with the sear **514** to retain the sear **514** in the cocked position **524**, and (iii) move the dry fire lockout **542** to the lockout position **541** to block the sear **514** from moving to the de-cocked position **557**.

[0115] The cocking mechanism **484** includes a rotating member, such as the spool **560**, with a flexible tension member, such as for example, a belt, a tape or webbing material **585**, attached to pin **587** on the string carrier **480**. As best illustrated in FIGS. **19** and **20**, the cocking mechanism **484** includes drive shaft **564** with a pair of drive gears **566** meshed with gear teeth **568** on opposite sides of the spool **560**. Consequently, the spool **560** is subject to equalize torque applied to the spool **560** during the cocking operation. Cocking handle **454** that releasably attaches to either of exposed ends of pin **570** of the drive shaft **564**.

[0116] A pair of pawls **572**A, **572**B ("**572**") include teeth **574** (see FIG. **20**) that are biased into engage with the gear teeth **568**. The pawls **572** are preferably offset ½ the gear tooth **568** spacing so that when the teeth **574** of one pawl **572** are disengaged from the gear teeth. **568**, the teeth **574** on the other pawl **572** are positioned to engage the gear teeth **568**. Consequently, during winding of the spool **560**, the teeth **574** on one of the pawls **572** are always positioned to engage with the gear teeth **568** on the spool. If the user inadvertently released the cocking handle **454** when the crossbow **400** is under tension, one of the pawls **572** is always in position to arrest rotation of the spool **560**.

[0117] In operation, the user presses the release **576** to disengage the pawls **572** from the spool **560** and proceeds to rotate the cocking handle **454** to move the string carrier **480** in either direction **482** along the rail **402** to cock or de-cocking the crossbow **400**. Alternatively, the crossbow **400** can be cocked without depressing the release **576**, but the pawls **572** will make a clicking sound as they advance over the gear teeth **568**.

[0118] FIGS. **21**A and **21**B illustrate the crossbow **400** in. the released configuration **600**. Draw string **501** is located adjacent down-range side **602** of the cams **440** in a reverse draw configuration **604**. In the illustrated embodiment of the released configuration **600** the draw string **501** is adjacent stops **606** attached to power cable bracket **608**.

[0119] Upper power cables **610**A are attached to the power cable bracket **608** at upper attachment points **612**A and to power cable attachments **462**A on the cams **440** (see also FIG. **22**A). Lower power cables **610**B are attached to the power cable bracket **608** at lower attachment points **612**B and to the power cable attachments **462**B on the cams **440** (see also FIG. **22**B). The attachment points **612** are static relative to the riser **404**, rather than dynamic attachment points on the opposite limbs or opposite cams. As used herein, "static attachment point" refers to a cabling system in which power cables are attached to a fixed point relative to the riser, and not attached to the opposite limb or opposite cam.

[0120] In the illustrated embodiment, the attachment points **612**A, **612**B for the respective power cables **610** are located on opposite sides of the center rail **402**. Consequently, the power cables **610** do not cross over the center rail **402**. As used herein, "without crossover" refers to a cabling system in which power cables do not pass through a vertical plane bisecting the center rail **402**.

[0121] As best illustrated in FIG. **21**B, the upper and lower attachment points **612**A, **612**B on the power cable bracket **608** maintains gap **614** between the upper and lower power cables **610**A, **610**B greater than the gap at the axes of the cams **440**. Consequently, the power cables **610**A, **610**B angle toward each other near the cams **440**.

[0122] FIGS. **22**A and **22**B are upper and lower perspective views of the cams **440** with the cables **510**, **610**A, and **610**B in the released configuration **600**. The cams **440** are preferably symmetrical so only one of the cams **440** is illustrated. Upper power cables **610**A are attached to power cable attachments **462**A, wrap around the upper pivots **463**A and then return toward the bow **400** to attach to the power cable bracket **608** {see FIG. **21**A). The draw cable **501** is attached to the draw string mount **472** and then wraps almost completely around the cam **440** in the draw string journal **464** to the down range side **602**.

[0123] FIGS. **23**A and **23**B illustrate the crossbow **400** in the drawn configuration **620**. Draw string **501** extends from the down-range side **602** of the cams **440** in a reverse draw configuration **604**. As best illustrated in FIG. **23**B, the power cables **610**A, **610**B move away from the cams **440** as they wrap onto the upper and lower helical journals **460**A, **460**B. In the drawn configuration **620** the power cables **610**A, **610**B are generally parallel (compare the angled relationship in the released configuration **600** illustrated in FIG. **21**B). The resulting gap **622** permits the power cable attachments **462** and pivot **463** to pass under the power cables **610** without contacting them (see also, FIGS. **24**A and **24**B) as the crossbow **400** moves between the released configuration **600** and the drawn configuration **620**. As best illustrated in FIG. **24**C, gaps **623** between surfaces **625** of the cams **440** and the power cables **610** is greater than height **627** of the power cable attachments **462** and the pivots **463**.

[0124] FIGS. **24**A and **24**B are upper and lower perspective views of the cams **440** with the cables **510**, **610**A and **610**B in the drawn configuration **620**. The upper power cables **610**A wraps around the upper pivots **463**A and then onto the upper helical journal **460**A, before returning to the power cable bracket **608** (see FIG. **23**A). Similarly, the lower power cables **610**B wraps around the lower pivots **463**B and then onto the lower journal **460**B, before returning to the power cable bracket **608** (see FIG. **23**A). The draw cable **501** is attached to the draw string mount **472** unwraps almost completely from the draw string journal **464** of the cam **440** to the down range side **602**.

[0125] In the illustrated embodiment, the draw string journal **464** rotates between about 270 degrees and about 330 degrees, and more preferably from about 300 degrees to about 360 degrees, when the crossbow **400** is drawn from the released configuration **600** to the drawn configuration **620**. In another embodiment, the draw string journal **464** rotates more than 360 degrees (see FIG. **9**A).

[0126] FIGS. **25**A and **25**B illustrate an alternate string carrier **480**A for the crossbow **400** in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. The string carrier **480**A is similar to the assembly illustrated in FIGS. **17**A-**17**C, so the same reference numbers are used where applicable.

[0127] FIG. **25**A illustrates the catch **502** is illustrated in a closed position **504**. The catch **502** is biased by spring **510** to rotate in direction **506** and retained in open position **505** (see FIG. **18**B).

Absent an external force, the catch **502** automatically releases the draw string **501** (See FIG. **17**A). In the closed position **504** illustrated in. FIG. **25**A, recess **512** on sear **514** engages with low friction device **513** on the catch **502** to retain the catch **502** in the closed position **504**. The sear **514** is biased by spring **519** to retain the catch **502** in the closed position **504**. The safety **522** operates as discussed in connection with FIGS. **17**A-**17**C.

[0128] Spring **540**A biases dry fire lockout **542**A toward the catch **502**. Distal end **544**A of the dry fire lockout **542**A engages the sear **514** in a lockout position **541** to prevent the sear **514** from releasing the catch **502**. Even if the safety **522** is disengaged from the sear **514**, the distal end **544**A of the dry fire lockout **542**A locks the sear **514** in the closed position **504** to prevent the catch **502** from releasing the draw string **501**.

[0129] As illustrated in FIG. **25**B, when the bolt **416** is positioned on the string carrier **480**A the rear portions or arms on the clip-on nock **417** extends past the draw string **501** (so a poltion of the nock **417** is behind the draw sting **501**) and engages with the portion **543**A on the dry fire lockout **542**A, causing the dry fire lockout **542**A to rotate in direction **546**A so that the distal end **544**A is disengaged from the sear **514**. In the illustrated embodiment, the portion **543**A is a protrusion or finger on the dry fire lockout **542**A. Only when a bolt **416** is fully engaged with the draw string **501** will the dry fire lockout **542**A permit the sear **514** to release the catch **502**.

[0130] In the illustrated embodiment, the portion **543**A on the dry fire lockout **542**A is positioned behind the draw string location **501**A. As used herein, the phrase “behind the draw string” refers to a region between a draw string and a proximal end of a crossbow. Conventional flat or half-moon nocks do not extend far enough rearward to reach the portion **543**A of the dry fire-lockout **542**A, reducing the chance that non approved arrows can be launched by the crossbow **400**.

[0131] FIGS. **25**A and **25**B illustrate elongated arrow capture recess **650** that retains rear portion **419** of the arrow **416** and the clip on nock **417** engaged with the string carrier **480**A, in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. The elongated arrow capture recess **650** extends along a direction of travel of an arrow launched from the crossbow **400**. The arrow capture recess **650** is offset above the rail **402** as is the rest **490** (see FIG. **14**C) so the arrow **416** is suspended above the rail **402** (see FIG. **13**B).

[0132] Upper roller **652** is located near the entrance of the arrow capture recess **650**. The upper roller **652** is configured to rotate in the direction of travel of the arrow **416** as it is launched. That is, the axis of rotation of the upper roller **652** is perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the arrow **416**. The upper roller **652** is displaced within the slot in a direction generally perpendicular to the arrow **416**, while spring **654** biases the upper roller **652** in direction **656** against the arrow **416**. As best illustrated in FIG. **25**C, the arrow capture recess **650** extends rearward past the fingers **500** on catch **502**. The string carrier **480**A includes lower angled surfaces **658**A, **658**B (“**658**”) and upper angled surfaces **660**A, **660**B (“**660**”) configured to engage the arrow **416** around the perimeter of the rear portion.

[0133] In the illustrated embodiment, the clip-on nock **417** must be fully engaged with the draw string **510**A near the rear of the arrow capture recess **650** to disengage the dry fire lock out **542**A. In this configuration (see FIG. **25**B), the rear portion **419** of the arrow **416** is fully engaged with the arrow capture recess **650**, surrounded by the rigid structure of the string carrier **480**A.

[0134] In one embodiment, the lower angled surfaces **658** do not support the arrow **416** in the arrow capture recess **650** unless the clip-on nock **417** is used. In particular, the upper angled surfaces **660** prevent the nock **417** from rising upward when the crossbow **400** is fired, but the arrow **417** tends to slide downward off the lower angled surfaces **658** unless the clip-on nock **417** is folly engaged with the draw string **510**A.

[0135] By contrast, prior art crossbows typically include a leaf spring or other biasing structure to retain the arrow against the rail. These devices tend to break and are subject to tampering, which can compromise accuracy.

[0136] FIGS. **25**D-**25**F illustrate additional details about the nock **417** for use with the present crossbow **400**. Prongs **850** flex outward **852** until the draw string **510** is seated in semi-circular opening **854**. In order to withstand the forces generated in high-powered bows, the nock **417** is preferably molded from a reinforced polymeric material (or blend of polymeric materials). Suitable materials and other aspects of the nock **417** are disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/631,016, entitled HIGH IMPACT STRENGTH LIGHTED NOCK ASSEMBLY, filed, Jun. 23, 2017 and U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/631,004; entitled HIGH IMPACT STRENGTH NOCK ASSEMBLY, filed Jun. 23, 2017, the entire disclosure of which are both hereby incorporated by reference.

[0137] The portion **543**A on the dry fire lockout **542**A engages with the nock **417** in region **856** behind the draw string **510**, causing the dry fire lockout **542**A to rotate in direction **546**A so that the distal end **544**A is disengaged from the sear **514**. The region **856** is preferably at least about 0.1 inches long. Flat regions **858** illustrated in FIG. **25**F are preferably separate by a distance **860** of about 0.250 inches, which corresponds to gap between fingers **500** on a bowstring catch **502** for the crossbow (See FIG. **25**C). The flat regions **858** are securely captured between the fingers **500** to retain the nock **417** in the correct orientation relative to the draw string **510**, resulting in precise and repeatable registration of the nock **417** to the catch **502**. In particular, an axis of the opening **854** is retained parallel with the draw string **510** in the drawn configuration.

[0138] FIG. **25**G illustrates the arrow **416** for use in an arrow assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. The arrow **416** includes threaded front insert **862** that receives an arrow head **864** with a threaded stem **866** having compatible threads. Shaft **868** includes fletching **870** and rear opening **872** configured to receive the nock **417** and a variety of other lighted and non-lighted nock assemblies in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0139] FIG. **25**H illustrates nock assembly **880** and bushing **884**, which can be used with or without light assembly **882**, in the arrow **416** in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. The bushing **884** is preferably constructed from a light weight metal and is sized to be receive rear opening **872** of the arrow shaft **868**. In the illustrated embodiment, the bushing **884** includes shoulder **886** that engages with rear end of the arrow shaft **868**.

[0140] The present application is also directed to a plurality of matched weight arrows **416** configured to have substantially the same weight, whether used with our without a lighted assembly **882** or different weight tip **864**, so their flight characteristics are the substantially the same. As used herein, “matched weight arrows” refers to a plurality of arrows with the same functional characteristics, such as for example, length, stiffness, weight, and diameter, that exhibit substantially similar flight characteristics when launch from the same bow. The present matched weight arrows **416** have a weight difference of less than about 10%, more preferably less than about 5%, and most preferably less than about 2%. In operation, matched weight arrows can be used interchangeable without adjusting the sight or scope on the bow.

[0141] For a non-lighted arrow **416**, for example, the bushing **884** and the nock **417** are inserted into the rear opening **872**, without the lighted assembly **882**. For a lighted arrow **416**, for example, the lighted assembly **882** and bushing **884** are inserted into the rear opening **872**. Since the lighted assembly **882** and bushing **884** are heavier than just the nock **417** and bushing **884**, the weight of the lighted arrow is adjusted by removing weight from the shaft **868**, the threaded front insert **862**, or the fletching **870**, so the lighted arrow weighs substantially the same as a non-lighted arrow. In one embodiment, weight is removed from the front insert **862** of the lighted arrow to offset the weight added by the light assembly **882**. In another embodiment, two different rear bushings **884** of different weight are used to offset some or all of the weight difference. In another embodiment, weight is added to the non-lighted arrows **416**, such for example, in the threaded front insert **862** or the rear bushing **884**, equal to the amount of weight added by the lighted assembly **882**. Consequently, the user can carry both lighted arrows and n-lighted arrows having substantially the same weight and flight characteristics. These matched weight arrows **416** can be used interchangeable without effecting accuracy.

[0142] FIG. **26**A illustrates an alternate the cocking handle **720** with an integral clutch to prevent excessive torque on the cocking mechanism **484** and tension on the flexible tension member **585** in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. As discussed in connection with FIG. **14**D, distal end **700** is configured to engage with drive shaft **564** and pins **570**. Center recess **702** receives the drive shaft **564** and the undercuts **704** engage with the pins **570** when the system is under tension. Consequently, when cocking or uncocking the crossbow **400** the tension in the system locks the pins **570** into the undercuts **704**. When tension in the system is removed, the cocking handle **454** can be rotated a few degrees and disengaged from the drive shaft **564**.

[0143] FIG. **268** is an exploded view of the cocking handle **720** of FIG. **26**A. Distal end **700** contains a torque control mechanism **722**. Coupling **724** that engages with the drive shaft **564** is contained between a pair of opposing friction washers **726** and a pair of opposing notched washers **728** within head **729**. Pins **730** couple the notched washers **728**. One or more spring washers **732**, such as for example Belleville washers, conical spring washers, and the like, maintain a compressive load on the coupling **724** to control the torque applied to the drive shaft **564**. The magnitude of the compressive load applied to the coupling establishes a pre-set maximum torque that can be applied to the drive shaft **564**. The maximum torque or break-away torque at which the coupling **724** slips relative to the cocking handle **720** preferably corresponds to about 110% to about 150% of the force on the flexible tension member **585** during cocking of the crossbow **400**.

[0144] In an alternate embodiment, the drive shaft **564** is three discrete pieces **565**A, **565**B, **565**C connected by torque control mechanisms located in housings **567**A **567**B. A torque control mechanism **722** generally as illustrated in FIG. **26**B may be used.

[0145] The string carrier **480** hits a mechanical stop when it is fully retracted, which corresponds to maximum draw string **501** tension. Tension on the draw string **501** is highly repeatable and uniform throughout the string system due to the operation of the string carrier **480**. Further pressure on the cocking handle **720** causes the coupling **724** to slip within the head **729**, preventing excessive torque on the cocking mechanism **484** and tension on the flexible tension member **585**.

[0146] FIGS. **27**A-**27**C illustrates an alternate tunable arrow rest **750** in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. The tunable arrow rest **750** includes housing **760** that is positioned just behind the pocket **426**. A pair of spring loaded support rollers **752** are rotatably secured in slots **754** by pins **756**. The support rollers **752** rotate freely around the pins **756**. When compressed, the support rollers **752** can be independently displaced in directions **758**. Springs **764** (see FIG. **27**B) bias the pins **756** and the support rollers **752** to the tops of the slots.

[0147] As best seen in FIG. **27**B with the housing **760** removed, arrow rest **750** is mounted to distal end **776** of the center rail **402** by fasteners **762**. Each of the support rollers **752** is biased to the tops of the slots **754** by the springs **764**. Rotating member **766** is provided at the interface between the support rollers **752** and the springs **764** to reduce friction and permit the support rollers **752** to turn freely.

[0148] As best seen in FIGS. **27**C and **27**D the housing **760** includes enlarged openings **768** with diameters larger than the diameters of the fasteners **762**. Consequently, the position of the arrow rest **750** can be adjusted (i.e., tuned) in at three degrees of freedom—the Y-direction **770**, the Z-direction **772**, and roll **774** relative to the center rail **402**. FIG. **27**D illustrates an arrow **412**, with arrowhead **428** positioned on the support rollers **752** and the various degrees of freedom **770**, **772**, **774** available for tuning the arrow rest **750**.

[0149] FIGS. **28**A-**28**E illustrate alternate cocking systems **800** in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure in which the cocking mechanism **484** located in the stock **408** and the flexible tension member **585** are not required. In one embodiment, the string carrier **480** when not engaged with the draw string **501** slides freely back and forth along the rail between the released configuration and the drawn configuration. At least one cocking rope engagement mechanism **802** is attached to the string carrier **480**. In the illustrated embodiment, a pair of pulleys **804** are pivotally attached to opposite sides of the string carrier **480** brackets **806** and pivot pins **808**.

[0150] A variety of conventional cocking ropes **810** can releasably engage with the pulleys **804**. The hooks found on conventional cocking ropes are not required. As best illustrated in FIG. **28**C, the user pulls handles **812** to draw the string carrier **480** to the retracted position **814**. The cocking rope **810** can be a single discrete segment of rope or two discrete segments of rope. In the illustrated embodiment, two discrete cocking ropes **810** are each attached to opposite sides of the stock **408** at anchors **816** and wrap around the pulleys **804** to provide the user with mechanical advantage when cocking the bow **400**.

[0151] It will be appreciated that a variety of different cocking rope configurations can be used with the string carrier **480**, such as disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,095,128 (Bednar); U.S. Pat. No. 6,874,491 (Bednar); U.S. Pat. No. 8,573,192 (Bednar et al.); U.S. Pat. No. 9,335,115 (Bednar et al.); and 2015/0013654 (Bednar et al.), which are hereby incorporated by reference.

[0152] In one embodiment, the cocking ropes **810** retract into handles **812** for convenient storage. For example, protrusions **826** on handles **812** can optionally contain a spring-loaded spool that automatically retracts the cocking ropes **810** when not in use, such as disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 8,573,192 (Bednar et al.). In another embodiment, a retraction mechanism for storing the cocking ropes when not in use are attached to the stock **408** at the location of the anchors **816** such as disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,874,491 (Bednar). In another embodiment, a cocking rope retraction system with a spool and crank handle can be attached to the stock **408**, such as illustrated in U.S. Pat. No. 7,174,884 (the '884 Kempf Patent”).

[0153] In operation, when the draw string **501** is in the released configuration **600** the user slides the string carrier **480** forward along the rail into engagement with the draw string **501**. The catch. **502** (see e.g., FIG. **25**A) on the string carrier **480** engages the draw string **501** as discussed herein. The user pulls the handles **812** until the string carrier **480** is retained in the retracted position **814** by retaining mechanism **817**. The retaining mechanism **817** retains the string carrier **480** in the retracted position **814** independent of the cocking ropes **810**. That is, once the string carrier **480** is in the retracted position **814** the retaining mechanism **817** the cocking ropes **810** can be removed and stored.

[0154] In the embodiment illustrated in FIGS. **28**D and **28**E the retaining mechanism **817** is hook **818** attached to the stock configured to couple with pin **819** on the string carrier **480**. Release lever **820** moves the hook **818** in direction **822** to disengage it from the pin **819** on the string carrier **480**. When the crossbow is in the drawn configuration, the force **824** applied to the string carrier **480** by the draw string prevent the hook **818** from inadvertently disengaging from the pin **819** on the string carrier **480**. During transport the string carrier **480** can be secured to either the draw string **501** in. the release configuration **600** or to the hook **818** in the retracted configuration **814** without the draw string **501** attached.

[0155] FIG. **28**F illustrates an alternate embodiment where the cocking rope **810** is a single segment that wraps around the stock **408** rather than requiring anchors **816**. The opposite ends of the cocking rope **810** then wrap around the cocking rope engagement mechanisms on opposite sides of the string carrier **480**. The user pulls the handles **812** toward the proximal end of the crossbow **400** to manually retract the string carrier **480** to the retracted position and the draw string to the drawing configuration.

[0156] In order to de-cock the crossbow **400**, the user pulls the handles **812** to retract the string carrier **480** toward the stock **408** a sufficient amount to disengage the hook **818** from the pin **819**. In one embodiment, the user rotates the release lever **820** in direction **821** about 90 degrees. The release lever **820** biases the hook **818** in direction. **822**, but the force **824** prevents the hook **818** from moving in direction **822**. The user then pulls the handles **812** toward the stock **408** to remove the force **824** from the hook **818**. Once the pin **819** clears the hook **818** the biasing force applied by the release lever **820** moves the hook **818** in direction **822**. The user can now slowly move the string carrier **480** toward the released configuration **600**.

[0157] As illustrated in. FIG. **29** extensions **830** on the string carrier **480** are engaged with. undercuts **832** in the rail **402**. Consequently, the string carrier **480** is captured by the rail **402** and can only move back and forth along the rail **402** (Y-axis), but cannot move in the Z axis or X-axis direction, or in pitch **834**, roll **836**, or yaw **838**, relative to the draw string **501**. In an alternate embodiment, the extension **830** are located on the exterior surface of the rail **402** and the string carrier **480** wraps around the rail **402** to engage the undercuts **832**. In one embodiment, the extensions **830** are retractable so the string carrier **480** can be removed from the rail **402**. With the extensions **830** in the extended position illustrated in FIG. **29** the string carrier **480** is captured by the rail **402**.
[0158] In particular, when in the drawn configuration tension forces on the draw string **501** on opposite sides of the string carrier **480** are substantially the same, within less than about 1.000, and more preferably less than about 0.5%, and most preferably less than about 0.1%. Consequently, cocking and firing the crossbow **400** is highly repeatable.
[0159] To the extent that manufacturing variability creates inaccuracy in the crossbow **400**, any such inaccuracy are likewise highly repeatable, which can be compensated for with appropriate windage and elevation adjustments in the scope **414** (See FIG. **13**B). The repeatability provided by the present cocking systems **484**, **800** results in a highly accurate crossbow **400** at distances beyond the capabilities of prior art crossbows. For example, the cocking systems **484**, **800** in combination with windage and elevation adjustments permits groupings of three arrows in a three-inch diameter target at about 100 yards, and groupings of three arrows in a two-inch diameter target at about 50 yards.
[0160] FIGS. **30**A-**30**F illustrate an alternate cocking mechanism **900** in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. Rotation of the rotating member **902** is effectuated by the pair of drive gears **566** on the drive shaft **564** illustrated in FIGS. **19** and **20** that mesh with gear teeth **568**. The drive shaft **564** would be mounted in location **903** but is omitted for clarity. Rather than the pawls **572** illustrated in FIGS. **19** and **20**, however, rotation of the rotating member **902** is controlled by an internal rotation arrester **910** controlled by release **960**. As will be discussed in further detail, the crossbow **400** can be cocked without the pawls **572** making a clicking sound as they advance over the gear teeth **568**.
[0161] As illustrated in FIG. **30**B, rotating member **902** includes non-cylindrical core **904** with offset pin **906**. The flexible tension member **585** is captured between the core **904** and the pin **906**. The oppose end **908** of the flexible tension member **585** is attached to pin **587** on the string carrier **480** (see FIG. **18**A).
[0162] As illustrated in FIGS. **30**B and **30**C, the rotating member **902** includes center opening **912** with diameter **914** greater than diameter **916** of support shaft **918**. A plurality of interference members **920** are located in gap **922** between the center opening **912** and the support shaft **918**. The support shaft **918** is prevented from rotating relative to the support rail **402** by key **924** bolted to the support rail **402** and positioned in slot **925** on the support shaft **918** (see FIG. **30**A). In the illustrated embodiment, the interference members **920** are elongated rods axially aligned with the support shaft **918**, but could be elongated members with a non-circular cross section, spherical, elliptical, or a variety of regular or irregular shapes.
[0163] Inside surface **940** of the center opening **912** in the rotating member **902** is smooth, but the outside surface **942** of the support shaft **918** includes a series of recesses **926** that receive the interference members **920**. In the illustrated embodiment, the recesses **926** are elongated and axially aligned with the support shaft **918**. Each recess **926** includes a sloped surface **930** that terminates at stop surface **932**. The sloped surfaces **930** can be flat or curved to create a camming action as the interference members **920** move from between first and second locations **972**, **974**.
[0164] In an alternate embodiment, the recesses **926** can be located on the inside surface **940** of the rotating member **902** or on both the inside surface **940** and the outside surface **942** of the support shaft **918**. In another embodiment, the recesses **926** have a shape corresponding to a shape of the

interference members **920**, such as spherical or elliptical.

[0165] When the interference members **920** are adjacent the stop surfaces **932** in the second location **974** the rotating member **902** can rotate freely around the support shaft **918**. As the interference members **920** ride up sloped surfaces **930** toward the first locations **972** near the tops **946** of the sloped surfaces **930**, however, the interference members **920** are compressed between the inside surface **940** of the center opening **912** and the outside surface **942** of the support shaft **918** to create compression forces **944** that prevents rotation of the rotating member **902** relative to the support shaft **918**. The compressive forces **944** acts generally along radial lines extending perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the support shaft **918** through each of the interference members **920**.

[0166] The recesses **926** are oriented so that when tension force **948** is placed on the flexible tension member **585** (see FIGS. **30**A and **30**B) the interference members **920** tend to shift toward the first locations **972** at the tops **946** of the sloped surfaces **930**, hence, creating compression forces **944** that arrest rotation of the rotating member **902**. That is, rotation of the rotating member **902** to unwind the flexible tension member **585** tends to move the interference members **920** toward the first locations **972**.

[0167] As illustrated in FIG. **30**D, support bearings **950** support the rotating member **902** on the support shaft **918** and maintain concentricity relative to the support shaft **918**. In the illustrated embodiment, sets of interference members **920**A, **920**B (“**920**”) are located on opposite sides of the support bearings **950**. Each set of interference members **920**A, **920**B is constrained to the support shaft **918** within respective recesses **926** by housings **952**A, **952**B C“**952**”), respectively. The housings **952** include openings **956** that expose the interference members **920** to permit engagement with inside surface **940** of the center opening **912**.

[0168] The housings **952** include flat surfaces **954** that couple with the release **960**. As illustrated in FIG. **30**E, the flat surfaces **954** couple with corresponding flat surfaces on the release **960**.

[0169] The housings **952** can rotate relative to the support shaft **918** to shift the interference members **920** within the recesses **926**. The housings **952** are biased by springs **962** in direction **970** to bias the interference members **920** toward the first locations **972** near the tops **946**. When the release **960** is depressed the housings **952** are rotated in the opposite direction **971** to shift the interference members **920** toward the second locations **974**. Consequently, unless the release **960** is depressed the interference members **920** counteract the tension force **948** and prevent rotation of the rotating member **902**.

[0170] In operation, as the user presses the release **960** the housings **952** are rotated in direction **971** to shift the interference members **920** along the sloped surfaces **930** toward the second location **974** near the stop surfaces **932**. In this configuration the compression forces **944** are substantially reduced and the rotating member **902** can turn freely round the support shaft **918**, permitting the flexible tension member **585** to be unwound. This configuration is typically used to move the string carrier **480** forward into engagement with the draw string **501** or to transfer the tension force **948** to the cocking handle **454** during de-cocking. If the flexible tension member **585** is under load, the user must first rotate the cocking handle **454** forward toward the top of the crossbow **400** to release the tension force **948** before the release **960** can be depressed.

[0171] Once the string carrier **480** is engaged with the draw string **501**, the user can rotates the cocking handle **454** to cock the crossbow **400**. Operation of the rotation arrester **910** is substantially silent. Operation of the springs **962** on the release **960** bias the housings **952** in direction **970** so the interference members **920** are urged to the first locations **972**. If at any time the user releases the cocking handle **454**, the force **948** on the flexible tension member **585** and the bias on the housings **952** automatically shift to the first location **972** to activate the rotation arrester **910** (unless the release **960** is depressed) and prevent rotation of the rotating member **902**.

[0172] FIGS. **31**A-**31**C are perspective, top, and side views of a reduced length crossbow **400** with the trigger assembly **550** moved forward along the center rail **402** in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure. Locating the trigger assembly **550** well in front of the bowstring catch **502** on the string carrier **480** when in the drawn configuration is commonly known as a bullpup configuration. Various crossbows with a bullpup configuration are disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 8,671,923 (Goff et al); U.S. Pat. No. 9,140,516 (Hyde); U.S. Pat. No. 9,528,789 (Biafore et al.); and U.S. Pat. No. 9,658,025 (Trpkovski), which are hereby incorporated herein by reference.

[0173] The bullpup configuration of the present crossbow **400** preferably includes substantially the same components as the other embodiments disclosed herein, including the riser **404** mounted at the distal end **406** of the center rail **402** and the stock **408** located at the proximal end **410**. The stock **408** includes an integral check rest **1012** located over the string carrier **480** when in the retracted position. The riser **404** includes the limbs **420** extending rearward toward the proximal end **410**. String carrier **480** is captured by and slides in the center rail **402** as discussed herein. The string carrier **480** can be moved to the retracted position using the disclosed cocking mechanisms **484**,**900**, the cocking ropes **810** (see e.g., FIGS. **18**A and **28**A), or any other suitable mechanism.

[0174] In the illustrated embodiment, the release **576** for the cocking mechanism **484**, **900** is located in the butt-plate **1010** of the stock **408**. In operation the user wraps his fingers around the butt-plate **1010** during cocking/de-cocking/de-cooking the crossbow **400**, while operating the release **576** with his thumb.

[0175] In the illustrated embodiment, scope mount **412** extends from a location behind the string carrier **480** on the stock **408** to the power cable bracket **608** on the riser **404**. In an alternate embodiment, the scope mount **412** can be attached to just the stock **408** or to just the power cable bracket **608**, without the attachment point on the stock **408**.

[0176] Locating the trigger **558** forward along the center rail **402** permits the stock **408** to be substantially shortened. In one embodiment, the trigger **558** and hand grip **1004** are located between about 4 inches to about 10 inches forward of the string carrier **480** (when in the retracted position) and closer to the distal end **406** than in the other embodiments disclosed herein, with a corresponding decrease in the length of the stock **408**. In another embodiment the trigger **558** and hand grip **1004** are located proximate the midpoint **1006** between the distal end **406** and the proximal end **410** of the crossbow **400** of FIG. **31**. In the preferred embodiment, the trigger **558** and hand grip **1004** are near the midpoint **1006** within 10%, and more preferably 5%, of the overall length of the crossbow **400** of FIG. **31**. For example, if the overall length of the crossbow **400** is 28 inches, the trigger **558** and hand grip **1004** are located with 2.8 inches of the midpoint **1006**, and more preferably within 1.4 inches of the midpoint **1006**.

[0177] Locating the trigger **558** and hand grip **1004** near the midpoint **1006** provides better balance and reduces the overall length of the crossbow **400**. The front to back center of gravity is located closer to the hand grip **1004**. As used herein, center of gravity refers primarily to the forward and back center of gravity, since it is assumed the side-to-side center of gravity is located along a central longitudinal axis of the center rail **402**. In the preferred embodiment, the front to back center of gravity **1008** of the crossbow **400** is near the midpoint **1006** within 15%, and more preferably 10%, of the overall length of the crossbow **400**. For example, if the overall length of the crossbow **400** is 28 inches, the front to back center of gravity **1008** is located within 4.2 inches of the midpoint **1006**, and more preferably within. 2.8 inches of the midpoint **1006**. One of the difficulties with bullpup format crossbows is that the user's head and face may come into contact with the cocked bowstring. The extremely small include angle **403** of the draw string **501** when the crossbow **400** is in the drawn configuration (see e.g. FIGS. **13**A and **14**A) that sweeps the draw string **501** forward and closer to the central rail **402** to create a gap between the bowstring and the user's face. In the preferred embodiment the included angle **403** is less than about 25 degrees and more preferably less than about 20 degrees, The extremely narrow separation between the limbs **420** when in the drawn configuration combined with the string carrier **480** permit a significantly smaller included angle **403** than on conventional crossbows.

[0178] FIG. **32** illustrates the crossbow **400** with the stock **408** and center rail **402** hidden to reveal the trigger assembly **550**. The trigger assembly **550** is substantially the same as illustrated in FIG. **18**A, except that trigger linkage **559** is elongated to compensate for moving the trigger **558** forward closer to the distal end **406** (see FIG. **31**C). When the trigger **558** is depressed trigger linkage **559** rotates sear **514** in the clockwise direction to a de-cocked position **557** and the catch **502** moves to the open position **505** to release the draw string **501** (see e.g., FIG. **18**B).

[0179] Where a range of values is provided, it is understood that each intervening value, to the tenth of the unit of the lower limit unless the context clearly dictates otherwise, between the upper and lower limit of that range and any other stated or intervening value in that stated range is encompassed within this disclosure. The upper and lower limits of these smaller ranges which may independently be included in the smaller ranges is also encompassed within the disclosure, subject to any specifically excluded limit in the stated range. Where the stated range includes one or both of the limits, ranges excluding either both of those included limits are also included in the disclosure.

[0180] Unless defined otherwise, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which this disclosure belongs. Although any methods and materials similar or equivalent to those described herein can also be used in the practice or testing of the various methods and materials are now described. All patents and publications mentioned herein, including those cited in the Background of the application, are hereby incorporated by reference to disclose and described the methods and/or materials in connection with which the publications are cited.

[0181] The publications discussed herein are provided solely for their disclosure prior to the filing date of the present application. Nothing herein is to be construed as an admission that the present disclosure is not entitled to antedate such publication by virtue of prior invention. Further, the dates of publication provided may be different from the actual publication dates which may need to be independently confirmed.

[0182] Other embodiments are possible. Although the description above contains much specificity, these should not be construed as limiting the scope of the disclosure, but as merely providing illustrations of some of the presently preferred embodiments. It is also contemplated that various combinations or sub-combinations of the specific features and aspects of the embodiments may be made and still fall within the scope of this disclosure. It should be understood that various features and aspects of the disclosed embodiments can be combined with or substituted for one another in order to form varying modes disclosed. Thus, it is intended that the scope of at least some of the present disclosure should not be limited by the particular disclosed embodiments described above.

[0183] Thus the scope of this disclosure should be determined by the appended claims and their legal equivalents. Therefore, it will be appreciated that the scope of the present disclosure fully encompasses other embodiments, which may become obvious to those skilled in the art, and that the scope of the present disclosure is accordingly to be limited by nothing other than the appended claims, in which reference to an element in the singular is not intended to mean “one and only one” unless explicitly so stated, but rather “one or more.” All structural, chemical, and functional equivalents to the elements of the above-described preferred embodiment that are known to those of ordinary skill in the art are expressly incorporated herein by reference and are intended to be encompassed by the present claims. Moreover, it is not necessary for a device or method to address each and every problem sought to be solved by the present disclosure, for it to be encompassed by the present claims. Furthermore, no element, component, or method step in the present disclosure is intended to be dedicated to the public regardless of whether the element, component, or method step is explicitly recited in the claims.

Claims

1. A crossbow comprising: a center rail including a bottom portion, a proximal end, and a distal end positioned opposite the proximal end, the center rail at least partially defining a crossbow length and a midpoint plane intersecting a horizontal midpoint of the crossbow; a riser extending horizontally from the distal end; one or more limbs coupled to the riser; and a trigger extending from the bottom portion of the center rail and positioned within ten percent of the crossbow length from the midpoint plane.
2. The crossbow of claim 1, further comprising a bowstring catch coupled to the center rail, the trigger positioned forward the bowstring catch.
3. The crossbow of claim 2, wherein at least a portion of a drawstring converges with the bowstring catch when the drawstring is received within the bowstring catch.
4. The crossbow of claim 1, further comprising a grip coupled to the center rail and positioned adjacent the trigger, and wherein at least a portion of the grip is aligned with the midpoint plane.
5. The crossbow of claim 1, wherein a center of gravity of the crossbow is located substantially on the midpoint plane.
6. The crossbow of claim 1, wherein the one or more limbs includes two limbs coupled to opposite sides of the riser, and wherein the two limbs extend toward the proximal end.
7. The crossbow of claim 6, wherein a drawstring is received within at least a portion of each of the two limbs, and wherein the drawstring is arranged in a drawn configuration when the drawstring is received within a bowstring catch.
8. The crossbow of claim 1, further comprising: a stock coupled to the center rail and including an integral rest; and a string carrier slidably engaged within the center rail and positioned vertically below the integral rest.
9. The crossbow of claim 1, further comprising: a cocking mechanism slidably coupled to the center rail; a rotating member coupled to a flexible tension member, the flexible tension member coupled to the cocking mechanism; and a cocking handle configured to rotate the rotating member to retract the flexible tension member, wherein the cocking mechanism slides to a retracted positioned in response to rotation of the cocking handle.
10. The crossbow of claim 1, further comprising a drawstring positioned at an angle less than 25 degrees when the drawstring is in a drawn configuration.
11. A crossbow, comprising: a drawstring movable between a drawn configuration and a released configuration; a center rail including a bottom portion, a proximal end, and a distal end positioned opposite the proximal end, the center rail at least partially defining a crossbow length and a midpoint plane intersecting a horizontal midpoint of the crossbow; a riser extending horizontally from the distal end and including one or more limbs flexibly repositionable towards the proximal end when the drawstring is in the drawn configuration; and a trigger extending from the bottom portion of the center rail and configured to control actuation of a bowstring catch, wherein at least a portion of the drawstring converges with the midpoint plane when the drawstring is in the drawn configuration.
12. The crossbow of claim 11, wherein the trigger is positioned within ten percent of the crossbow length from the midpoint plane.
13. The crossbow of claim 11, further comprising a grip coupled to the center rail and positioned adjacent the trigger, and wherein at least a portion of the grip intersects the midpoint plane.
14. The crossbow of claim 11, further comprising: a cocking mechanism slidably coupled within the center rail and actuated via a release; a rotating member coupled to a flexible tension member, the flexible tension member coupled to the cocking mechanism; and a cocking handle configured to rotate the rotating member to retract the flexible member, wherein the release is located within the proximal end.
15. The crossbow of claim 11, further comprising a scope mount, and wherein the scope mount extends on either side of the midpoint plane along the center rail.

16. The crossbow of claim 11, wherein a center of gravity of the crossbow is located within fifteen percent of the crossbow length from the midpoint plane.
17. The crossbow of claim 11, wherein the bowstring catch is coupled to the center rail, and wherein the trigger is positioned forward the bowstring catch.
18. A crossbow, comprising: a drawstring repositionable between a drawn configuration and a released configuration; a center rail including a bottom portion, a proximal end, a distal end positioned opposite the proximal end, the center rail at least partially defining a midpoint plane intersecting a horizontal midpoint of the crossbow; a bowstring catch coupled to the center rail between the midpoint plane and the proximal end; and a trigger extending from the bottom portion of the center rail and configured to control actuation of the bowstring catch via an elongated member, the trigger positioned forward the bowstring catch.
19. The crossbow of claim 18, wherein the trigger is positioned at least partially intersecting the midpoint plane.
20. The crossbow of claim 18, wherein the drawstring is positioned at an angle less than 25 degrees when the drawstring is in the drawn configuration.