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United States Patent [19] Coleman

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[54] **INEXPENSIVE DIRECTIONAL ANTENNA THAT IS EASILY TUNED AND WEATHER RESISTANT**

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[57] ABSTRACT

An antenna array is disclosed in which a central vertical mast supports four radially extending struts. One loop of conducting elements, the director, is supported on the mast above the struts, on the mast below the struts and at the centrifugal end of two adjacent struts. A second loop of conducting elements, the reflector, is also supported on the mast above the struts and on the mast below the struts, and at the centrifugal end of the other two remaining struts. When the length of the director loop is smaller than the reflector loop and the reflector and director are both driven 180° out-of-phase of each other, the antenna functions similarly to a Swiss Quad antenna, but has structural and weather-resistant advantages over the Swiss Quad.

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[51] **Int. Cl.⁶** **H01Q 11/12**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **343/742; 343/867; 343/890**

[58] **Field of Search** 343/742, 744, 343/752, 890, 866, 867

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15 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets

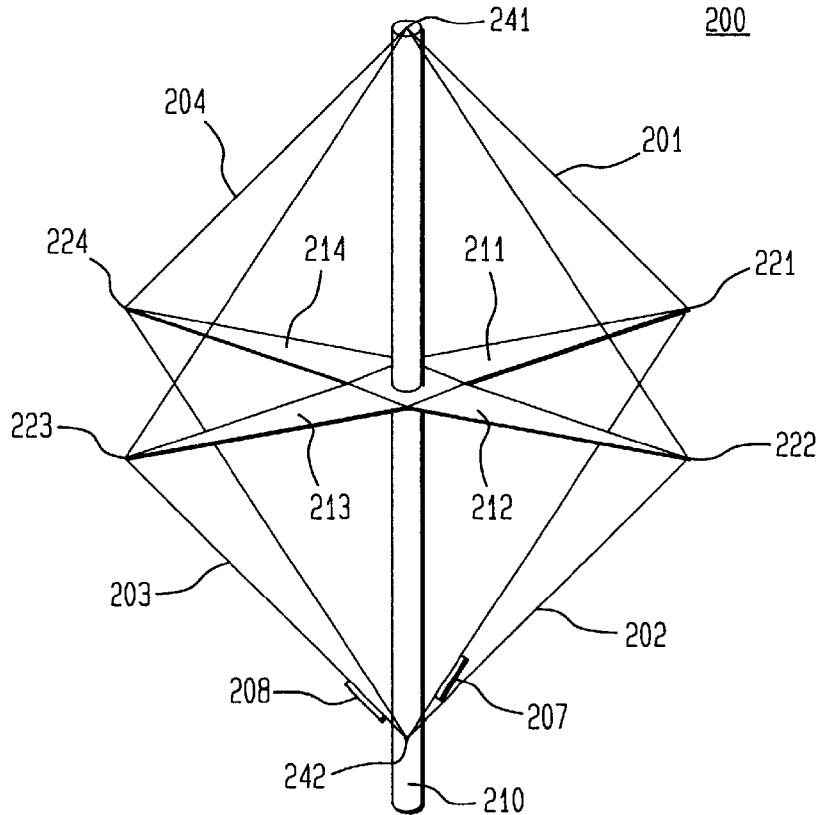


FIG. 1
(PRIOR ART)

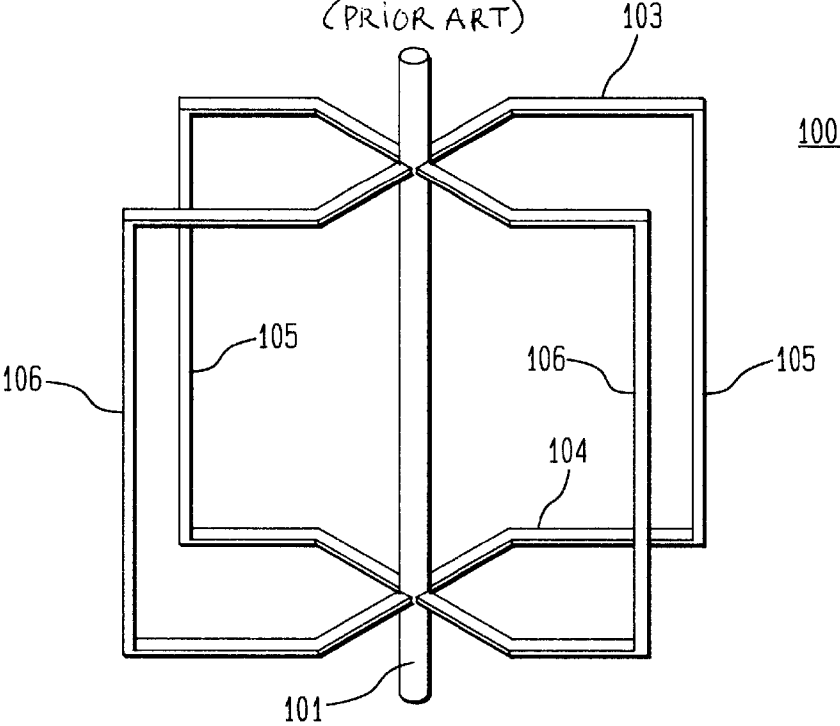


FIG. 2

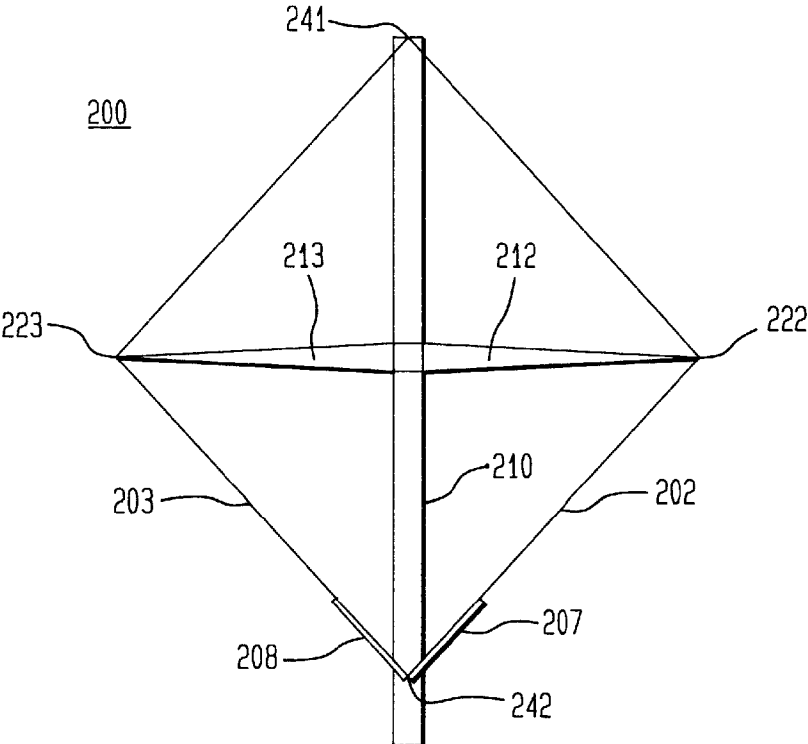


FIG. 3

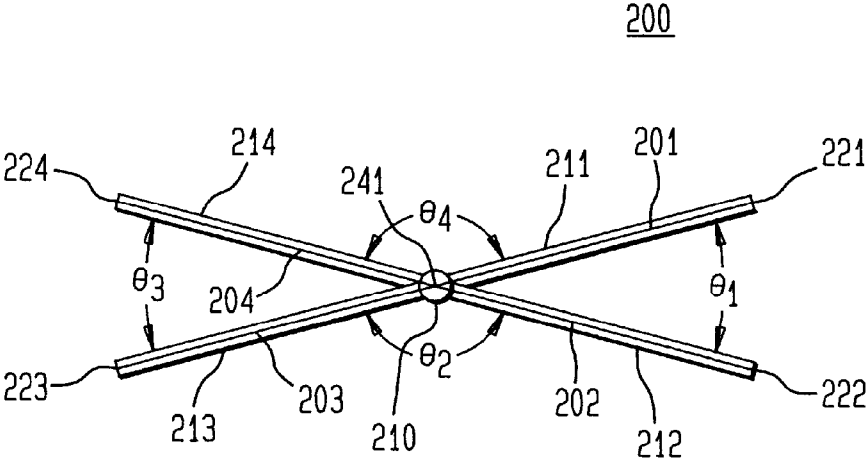


FIG. 4

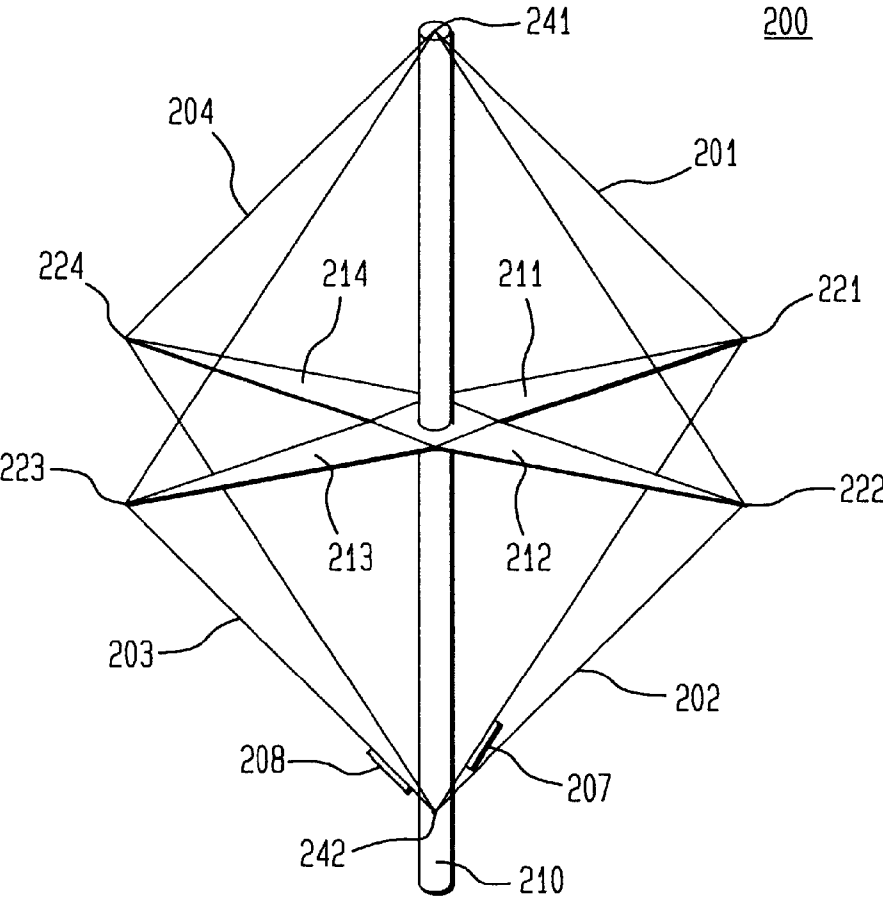


FIG. 5

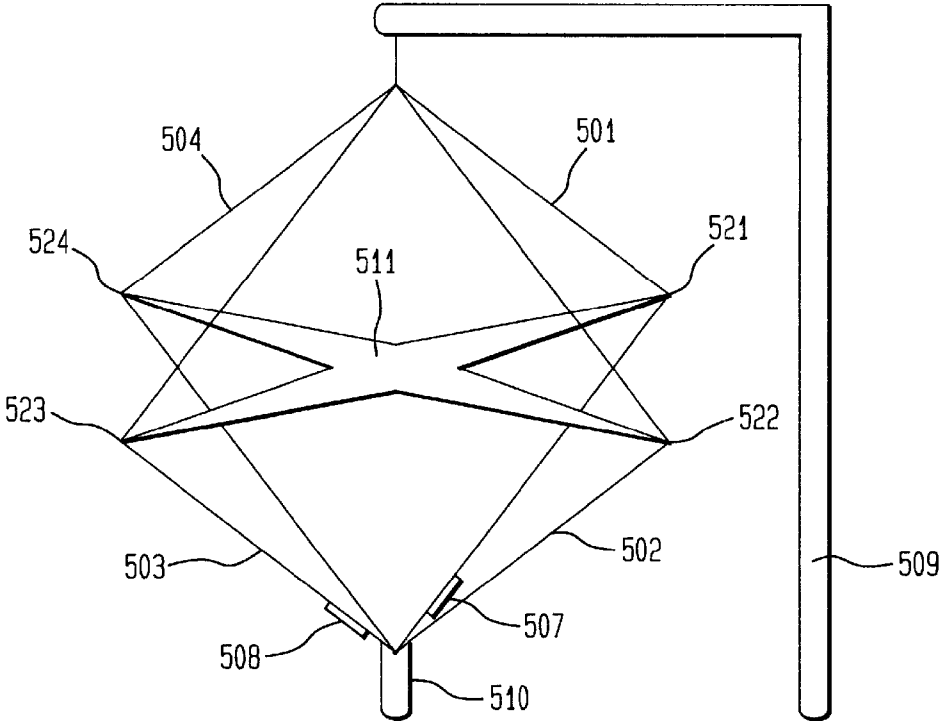
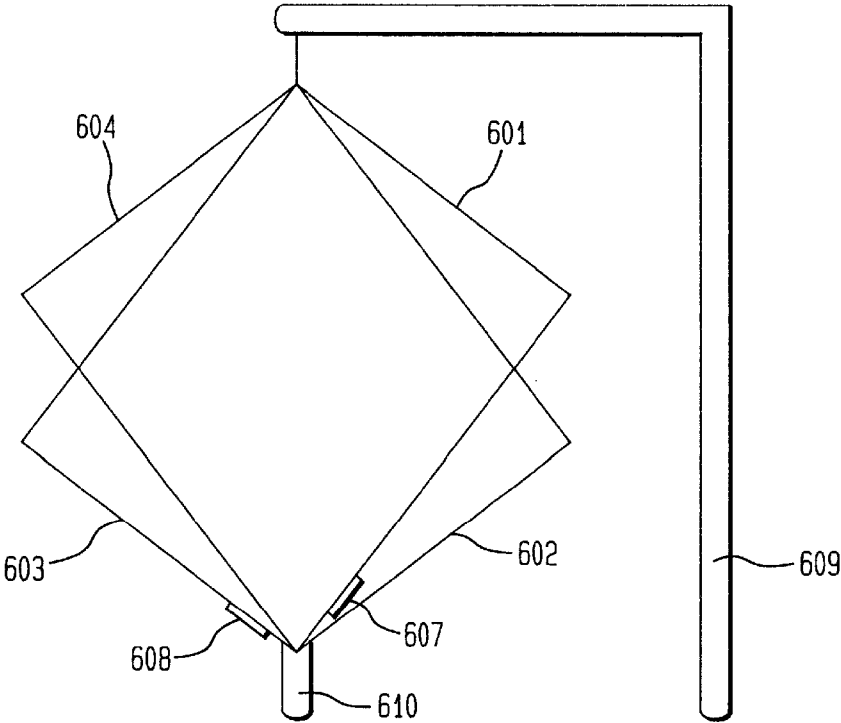


FIG. 6



**INEXPENSIVE DIRECTIONAL ANTENNA
THAT IS EASILY TUNED AND WEATHER
RESISTANT**

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to antennas in general, and, more particularly, to a directional array antenna.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

FIG. 1 depicts an isometric drawing of a Swiss Quad antenna in the prior art. The Swiss Quad antenna of FIG. 1 comprises: mast **101**, H-X support **103**, H-X support **104**, reflector **105** and director **106**. The Swiss Quad antenna of FIG. 1 is advantageous because: (1) of the degree of its directivity, (2) its small Turning radius, (3) its lightweight but strong design, and (4) the fact that the two antenna elements, reflector **105** and director **106**, can be electrically grounded to mast **101**, using "plumber's delight construction." It is well known to those skilled in the art how to make and use Swiss Quad antenna **100**. See "A 28-MHz Swiss Quad," *The ARRL Antenna Book*, The American Radio Relay League, pp. 12-7 to 12-9 (1994).

A Swiss Quad antenna has several disadvantages, however. First, H-X support **103** and H-X support **104** require a substantial amount of building materials and the builder must be meticulous during construction for the antenna to operate effectively. Second, a portion of both reflector **105** and director **106** are horizontal (the portions parallel with H-X support **103** and H-X support **104**), which encourages ice-buildup on reflector **105** and director **106** in winter. Ice-buildup is disadvantageous because it reduces the effectiveness of the antenna. And third, a Swiss Quad antenna is very tedious to tune because each tuning step requires the removal of four vertical segments of reflector **105** and director **106** that are precisely the same length. In otherwords, a Swiss Quad is not robust to minor mistakes made in tuning the antenna.

Therefore, the need exists for an antenna that has the advantages of a Swiss Quad but that uses fewer building materials, that inhibits icing and that is easier to tune.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Some embodiments of the present invention function as a directional antenna as well as a Swiss Quad antenna without some of the costs and restrictions associated with a Swiss Quad antenna in the prior art. In particular, some embodiments of the present invention are less costly to manufacture than a Swiss Quad antenna because the embodiments require fewer structural components yet still provide a strong, lightweight design. Furthermore, some embodiments of the present invention use diagonal conducting elements, which are less likely to ice than the horizontal conducting elements used in a Swiss Quad antenna. Furthermore, some embodiments of the present invention enable a simple, robust mechanism for fine-tuning the antenna.

These advantages can be found in an embodiment of the present invention in which a central vertical mast supports four radially extending struts. One loop of conducting elements, the director, is supported on the mast above the struts, on the mast below the struts and at the centrifugal end of two adjacent struts. A second loop of conducting elements, the reflector, is also supported on the mast above the struts and on the mast below the struts, and at the centrifugal end of the other two remaining struts. When the length of the director loop is smaller than the reflector loop

and the reflector and director are both driven 180° out-of-phase of each other, the antenna functions similarly to Swiss Quad antennas in the prior art.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 depicts a schematic diagram of a Swiss Quad antenna in the prior art.

FIG. 2 depicts a front view of an antenna in accordance with the illustrative embodiment.

FIG. 3 depicts a top view of the antenna in FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 depicts an isometric view of the antenna in FIG. 2.

FIG. 5 depicts an isometric drawing of a second illustrative embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 6 depicts an isometric drawing of a third illustrative embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FIG. 2 depicts a top view of an antenna in accordance with the illustrative embodiment of the present invention; FIG. 3 depicts a top view of the antenna of FIG. 2 and FIG. 4 depicts an isometric view of the antenna of FIG. 2. Antenna **200** advantageously has radiation and electrical characteristics that are similar to that of a Swiss Quad antenna.

The illustrative embodiment advantageously comprises: mast **210**, structural member **211**, structural member **212**, structural member **213**, structural member **214**, electrical conductor **201**, electrical conductor **202**, electrical conductor **203**, electrical conductor **204**, gamma match **207** and gamma match **208**.

Mast **210** is a structural member that is either a conductor or a non-conductor and that is strong enough to support the weight of antenna **200**. Structural member **211**, structural member **212**, structural member **213** and structural member **214** are advantageously supported by mast **210** and extend radially from mast **210**. structural member **211**, structural member **212**, structural member **213** and structural member **214** are advantageously nonconductors, or are insulated from the electrical conductors by an insulator. Antenna **200** can be fabricated using plumber's delight type construction.

Electrical conductor **201** advantageously extends from a first point, point **241** on mast **210** to the centrifugal end of structural member **211** and to a second point, point **242** on mast **210**. The centrifugal end of structural member **211** holds electrical conductor **201** at point **221** and point **241**, point **242** and point **221** lie in a first plane.

Electrical conductor **202** advantageously extends from a first point, point **241** on mast **210** to the centrifugal end of structural member **212** and to a second point, point **242** on mast **210**. The centrifugal end of structural member **212** holds electrical conductor **202** at point **222** and point **241**, point **242** and point **222** lie in a second plane.

Electrical conductor **203** advantageously extends from a first point, point **241** on mast **210** to the centrifugal end of structural member **213** and to a second point, point **242** on mast **210**. The centrifugal end of structural member **213** holds electrical conductor **203** at point **223** and point **241**, point **242** and point **223** lie in a third plane.

Electrical conductor **204** advantageously extends from a first point, point **241** on mast **210** to the centrifugal end of structural member **214** and to a second point, point **242** on mast **210**. The centrifugal end of structural member **214** holds electrical conductor **204** at point **224** and point **241**, point **242** and point **224** lie in a fourth plane.

Advantageously, the dihedral angle, θ_1 , between the first plane and the second plane and the dihedral angle, θ_3 ,

between the third plane and the fourth plane are congruent. In particular, θ_1 and θ_3 are each between 30° and 35° , and in particular 32° . Advantageously, the dihedral angle, θ_2 , between the second plane and the third plane, and the dihedral angle, θ_4 , between the fourth plane and the third plane are congruent. In particular, θ_2 and θ_4 are each between 145° and 150° , and in particular 148° . When the four dihedral angles are within the stated ranges, the radiation pattern of antenna **200** is quite similar to the radiation pattern of a Swiss Quad antenna. It will be clear to those skilled in the art how to determine the best angle for θ_1 , θ_2 , θ_3 and θ_4 given the diameter of the electrical conducting elements using antenna modeling software. For symmetry about the axis of maximum radiation it is advantageous to have θ_1 and θ_3 congruent, but θ_2 and θ_4 can vary to accommodate the modeling process.

Electrical conductor **201** and electrical conductor **204** form a loop that is the antenna's director. The length of electrical conductor **201** advantageously equals the length of electrical conductor **204** and the sum of their lengths advantageously equals 1.092λ , where λ equals the wavelength at which antenna **200** is designed to radiate.

Electrical conductor **202** and electrical conductor **203** form a loop that is the antenna's reflector. The length of electrical conductor **202** advantageously equals the length of electrical conductor **203** and the sum of their lengths advantageously equals 1.148λ , where λ equals the wavelength at which antenna **200** is designed to radiate.

Advantageously, gamma match **207** feeds electrical conductor **201** and gamma match **208** feeds electrical conductor **203**. It will be clear to those skilled in the art that gamma match **207** and gamma match **208** can constitute a T-match section, for example, by feeding conductor **202** in lieu of conductor **203**. The antenna director and antenna reflector can both be fed at point **241** or at point **242**, in well-known fashion. When mast **210** is vertically oriented, antenna **200** is horizontally polarized; when mast **210** is horizontally oriented, antenna **200** is vertically polarized. Advantageously, the antenna director is driven 180° out-of-phase from the antenna reflector and both the antenna director and the antenna reflector are driven at the same frequency, in well-known fashion.

Electrical conductor **201**, electrical conductor **202**, electrical conductor **203** and electrical conductor **204** can be electrically connected at point **241** and point **242**, which are both current nodes. Point **221**, point **222**, point **223** and point **224** are advantageously voltage nodes. Antenna **200** is advantageously fine-tuned by sliding the connector at either point **241** or point **242** or both up and down mast **210** and by shortening or lengthening electrical conductor **201**, electrical conductor **202**, electrical conductor **203** and electrical conductor **204** appropriately. Advantageously, the angle between point **241** and point **242** with the centrifugal end of each structural member at the vertex is maintained at 90° during tuning. It will be clear to those skilled in the art how to make and use antenna **200**, and how to use antenna modeling software to predict the antenna radiation pattern for any given set of desired parameters.

FIG. **5** depicts an isometric drawing of a second illustrative embodiment of the present invention in which the central mast of the first illustrative embodiment is replaced with an external mast from which the electrical conductors are suspended. In this embodiment, a single four-pronged compression member is supported by the four electrical conductors and is responsible for the determining the relative spacing of points **521**, **522**, **523** and **524**. The illustrative

embodiment of FIG. **5** operates in the same manner as the first illustrative embodiment and it will be clear to those skilled in the art how to make and use the embodiment in FIG. **5**.

FIG. **6** depicts an isometric drawing of a third illustrative embodiment of the present invention in which the four-pronged compression member of the second illustrative embodiment is eliminated and rigid electrical conductors are used that are capable of maintaining the desired geometry. The illustrative embodiment of FIG. **6** operates in the same manner as the first illustrative embodiment and it will be clear to those skilled in the art how to make and use the embodiment in FIG. **6**.

It is to be understood that the above-described embodiments are merely illustrative of the invention and that many variations may be devised by those skilled in the art without departing from the scope of the invention. It is therefore intended that such variations be included within the scope of the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. An antenna comprising:

a mast;

a first structural member having a first end and a second end, wherein said first end is supported by said mast and said first structural member extends radially from said mast;

a second structural member having a first end and a second end, wherein said first end is supported by said mast and said second structural member extends radially from said mast;

a third structural member having a first end and a second end, wherein said first end is supported by said mast and said third structural member extends radially from said mast;

a fourth structural member having a first end and a second end, wherein said first end is supported by said mast and said fourth structural member extends radially from said mast;

a first electrical conductor extending from a first point on said mast to said second end of said first structural member and from said second end of said first structural member to a second point on said mast, wherein said first point on said mast, said second point on said mast, said second end of said first structural member lie in a first plane;

a second electrical conductor extending from said first point on said mast to said second end of said second structural member and from said second end of said second structural member to said second point on said mast, wherein said first point on said mast, said second point on said mast, said second end of said second structural member lie in a second plane;

a third electrical conductor extending from said first point on said mast to said second end of said third structural member and from said second end of said third structural member to said second point on said mast, wherein said first point on said mast, said second point on said mast, said second end of said third structural member lie in a third plane;

a fourth electrical conductor extending from said first point on said mast to said second end of said fourth structural member and from said second end of said fourth structural member to said second point on said mast, wherein said first point on said mast, said second point on said mast, said second end of said fourth structural member lie in a fourth plane;

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wherein said first electrical conductor, said second electrical conductor, said third electrical conductor, and said fourth electrical conductor are all electrically connected at said first point and at said second point; and

wherein said first electrical conductor, said second electrical conductor, said third electrical conductor, and said fourth electrical conductor are all driven simultaneously.

2. The antenna of claim 1 wherein said first plane and said second plane intersect at a dihedral angle, θ_1 , between 30° and 35°, said second plane and said third plane intersect at a dihedral angle, θ_2 , between 145° and 150°, said third plane and said fourth plane intersect at a dihedral angle, θ_3 , between 30° and 35°, and said fourth plane and said first plane intersect at a dihedral angle, θ_4 , between 145° and 150°.

3. The antenna of claim 1 wherein said dihedral angle θ_1 equals 32°, said dihedral angle θ_2 equals 148°, said dihedral angle θ_3 equals 32°, and said dihedral angle θ_4 equals 148°.

4. The antenna of claim 1 further comprising a first gamma-match that feeds said first conductor and said fourth conductor.

5. The antenna of claim 4 further comprising a second gamma-match that feeds said second conductor and said third conductor.

6. The antenna of claim 1 wherein said first conductor and said fourth conductor form a director and said second conductor and said third conductor form a reflector.

7. The antenna of claim 6 wherein said director is driven 180° out-of-phase from said reflector.

8. The antenna of claim 1 wherein said first point on said mast and said second point on said mast are current nodes, and said first electrical conductor at said second end of said first structural member, said second electrical conductor at said second end of said second structural member, said third electrical conductor at said second end of said third structural member, and said fourth electrical conductor at said second end of said fourth structural member are voltage nodes.

9. The antenna of claim 1 wherein said mast is vertically oriented and said antenna is horizontally polarized.

10. An antenna comprising

a first linear electrical conductor extending from a first point in space to a second point in space and to a third point in space, wherein said first point, said second point and said third point lie in a first plane;

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a second linear electrical conductor extending from said first point to a fourth point in space and to said third point, wherein said first point, said fourth point and said third point lie in a second plane;

a third linear electrical conductor extending from said first point to a fifth point in space and to said third point, wherein said first point, said fifth point and said third point lie in a third plane; and

a fourth linear electrical conductor extending from said first point to a sixth point in space and to said third point, wherein said first point, said sixth point and said third point lie in a third plane;

wherein said first plane and said second plane intersect at a dihedral angle, θ_1 , between 30° and 35°, said second plane and said third plane intersect at a dihedral angle, θ_2 , between 145° and 150°, said third plane and said fourth plane intersect at a dihedral angle, θ_3 , between 30° and 35°, and said fourth plane and said first plane intersect at a dihedral angle, θ_4 , between 145° and 150°;

wherein said first electrical conductor, said second electrical conductor, said third electrical conductor, and said fourth electrical conductor are all electrically connected at said first point and at said second point; and

wherein said first electrical conductor, said second electrical conductor, said third electrical conductor, and said fourth electrical conductor are all driven simultaneously.

11. The antenna of claim 10 wherein said dihedral angle θ_1 equals 32°, said dihedral angle θ_2 equals 148°, said dihedral angle θ_3 equals 32°, and said dihedral angle θ_4 equals 148°.

12. The antenna of claim 10 further comprising a first gamma-match that feeds said first conductor and said fourth conductor.

13. The antenna of claim 12 further comprising a second gamma-match that feeds said second conductor and said third conductor.

14. The antenna of claim 10 wherein said first conductor and said fourth conductor form a director and said second conductor and said third conductor form a reflector.

15. The antenna of claim 14 wherein said director is driven 180° out-of-phase from said reflector.

* * * * *