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(54) **HIGH EFFICIENCY POWER CONTROLLER FOR LUMINAIRE**

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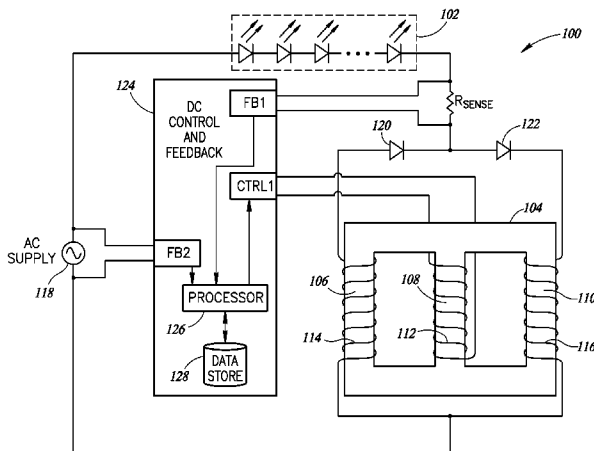
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Systems, methods and articles for providing lighting or illumination systems having drive circuits that employ a magnetic amplifier (“mag-amp”) and one or more feedback circuits to form a power converter that powers solid-state light sources (e.g., LEDs). The magnetic amplifier includes one or more magnetic cores which provides a controllable reluctance for magnetic flux. The magnetic amplifier includes one or more power windings which receive energy from an alternating current (AC) supply (e.g., AC mains) and delivers rectified AC current as direct current (DC) to one or more solid-state light sources. The magnetic amplifier includes one or more control windings coupled to a DC control source. The drive circuit may have two or more rectifiers (e.g., solid-state rectifiers) to provide a direct current to drive the solid-state light sources and also to isolate the one or more control windings from interference from the magnetic flux of the one or more power windings.

26 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets



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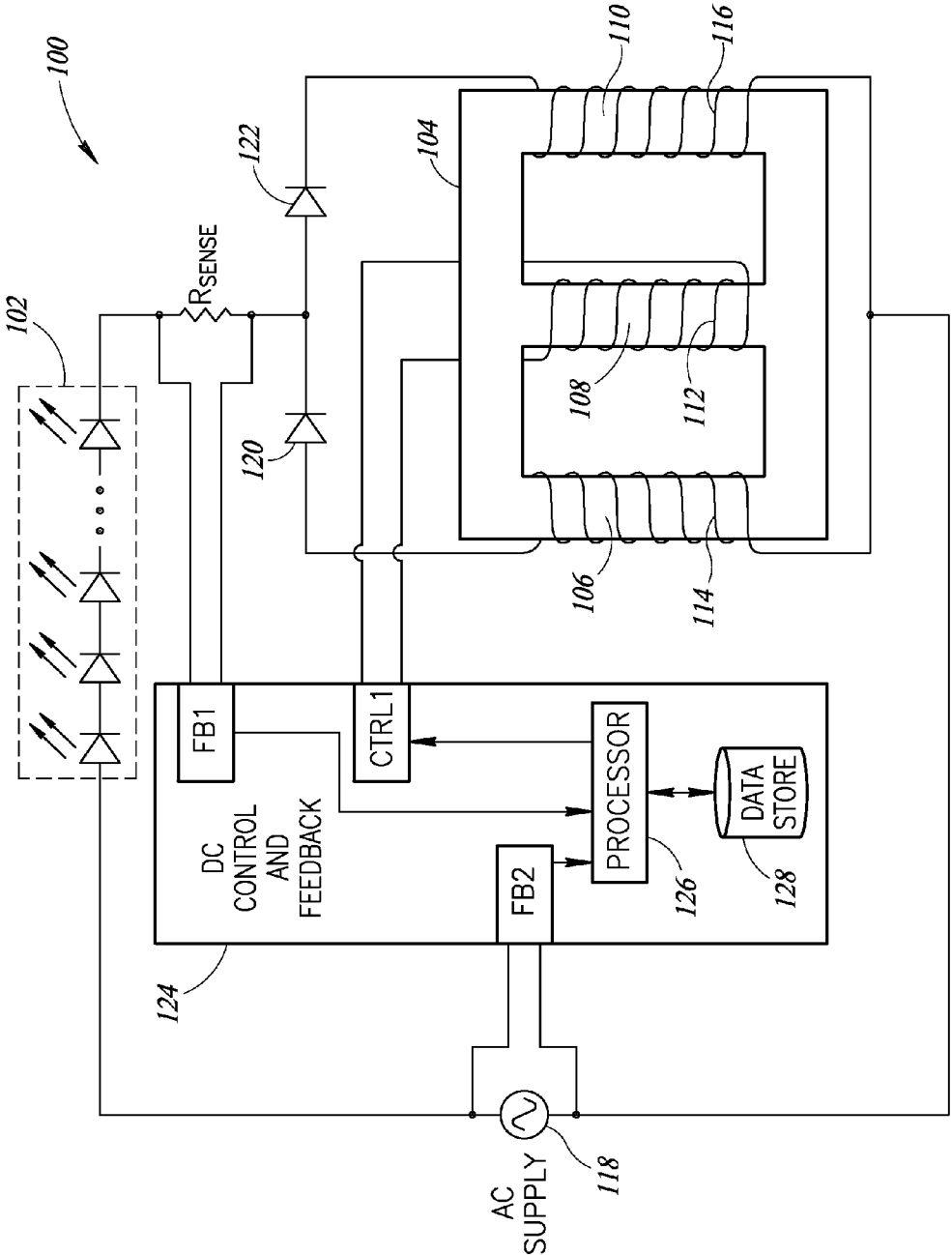


FIG.1

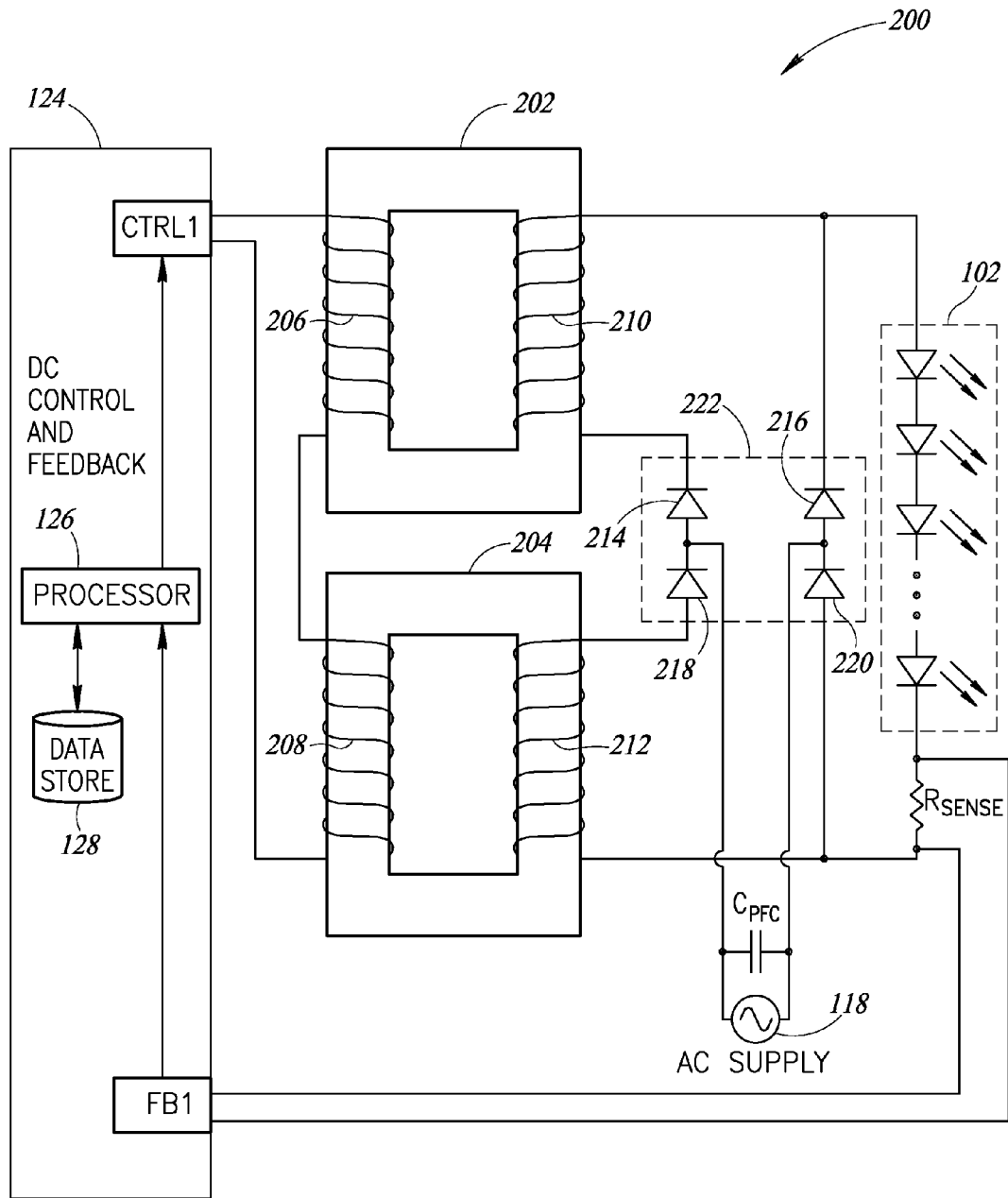


FIG.2

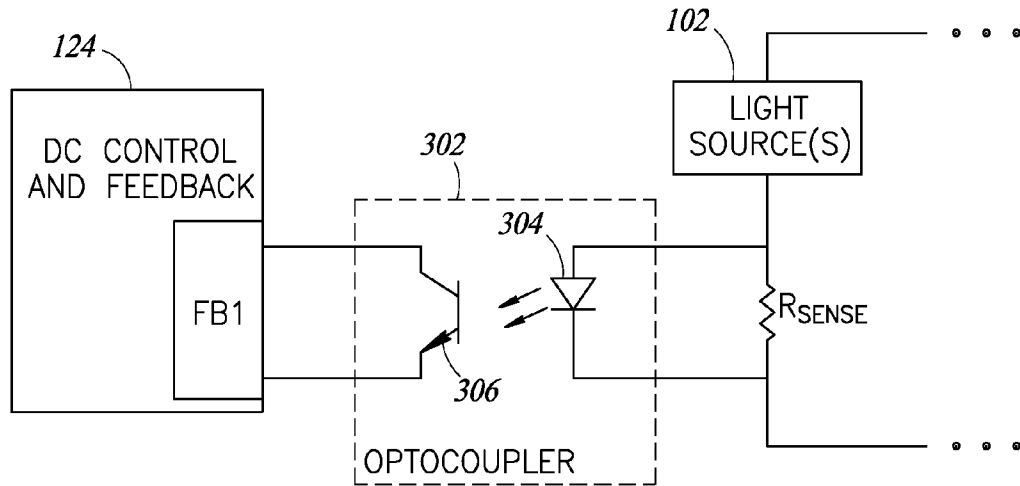


FIG.3

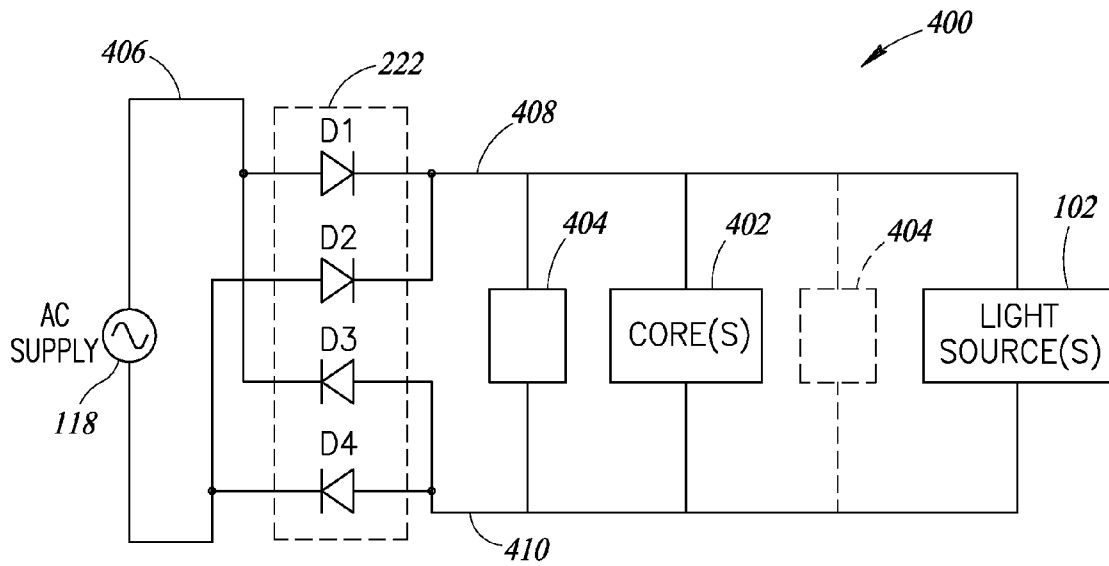


FIG.4

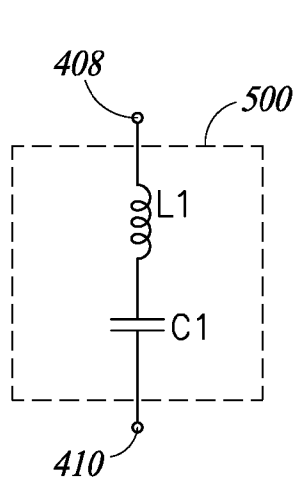


FIG.5A

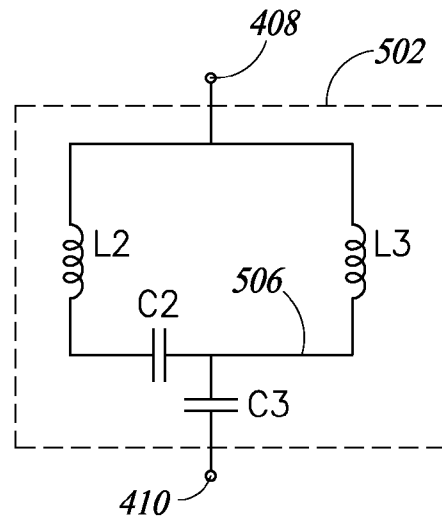


FIG.5B

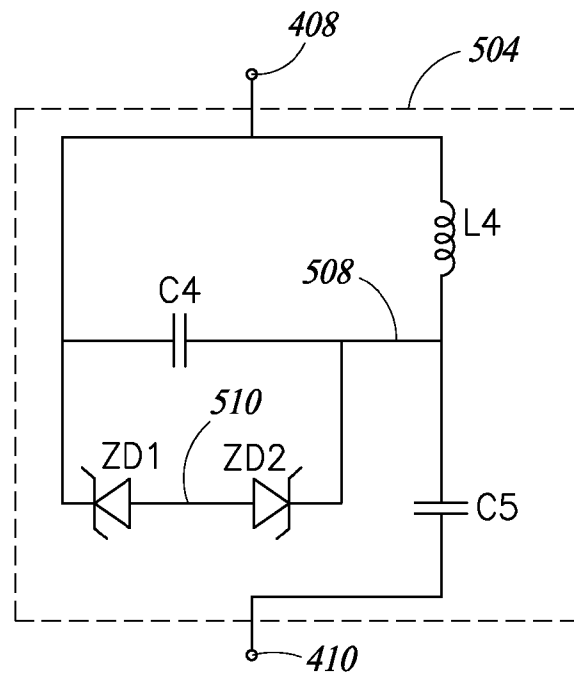


FIG.5C

HIGH EFFICIENCY POWER CONTROLLER FOR LUMINAIRE

BACKGROUND

1. Technical Field

The present disclosure relates to illumination, and more particularly to efficient power control for illumination systems.

2. Description of the Related Art

Luminaires enjoy widespread use in a variety of industrial, commercial, and municipal applications. Such applications can include general or area lighting of workspaces, roadways, parking lots, and the like. Multiple luminaires are typically arranged in patterns and positioned at intervals sufficient to provide a minimum overall level of illumination across the area of interest. For example, luminaires may be spaced at intervals along a driveway in a multilevel parking garage to provide an overall level of illumination that permits safe ingress and egress by pedestrians as well as permits safe operation of motor vehicles within the parking garage. In a similar manner, luminaires may be spaced at intervals throughout a commercial center parking lot to promote safe operation of motor vehicles, permit safe ingress and egress by customers, and foster a sense of safety and well-being for business patrons within the commercial center. Similarly, a number of luminaires may be spaced along a roadway to provide a level of illumination permitting safe operation of motor vehicles on the roadway and, where applicable, safe passage of pedestrians on sidewalks adjoining the roadway.

Energy conservation has become of ever-increasing importance. Efficient use of energy can result in a variety of benefits, including financial benefits such as cost savings and environmental benefits such as preservation of natural resources and reduction in “green house” (e.g., CO₂) gas emissions.

Residential, commercial, and street lighting which illuminate interior and exterior spaces consume a significant amount of energy. Conventional lighting devices or luminaires exist in a broad range of designs, suitable for various uses. Lighting devices employ a variety of conventional light sources, for example incandescent lamps, fluorescent lamps such as high-intensity discharge (HID) lamps (e.g., mercury vapor lamps, high-pressure sodium lamps, metal halide lamps).

One approach to reducing energy consumption associated with lighting systems employs higher efficiency light sources. Use of higher efficiency light sources may, for instance, include replacing incandescent lamps with fluorescent lamps or even with solid-state light sources (e.g., light emitting diodes (LEDs), organic LEDs (OLEDs), polymer LEDs (PLEDs)) to increase energy efficiency.

Solid-state light sources require a power converter to operate off of alternating current (AC) lines, also referred to as AC mains. The converter is typically a switch mode converter topology, such as flyback converter, LLC resonant converter, or the like. Other power converters that may be used are of the “AC LED” type, which switch in, or out, a variable number of solid-state light sources so that the forward voltage drop is close to the rectified AC line voltage.

Solid-state light sources are best powered using a constant current. This is due to the constant forward voltage (V_f) of the solid-state light source, for example, 3 volts. If a constant voltage converter is used, small variations in V_f of the solid-state light source(s) (e.g., due to temperature) will result in large variations in current through the solid-state light source(s). These large variations in current will cause signifi-

cant changes in light output and possibly damage the solid-state light source(s) by exceeding its rated power handling capacity.

BRIEF SUMMARY

An illumination system may be summarized as including: one or more magnetic cores; one or more control windings, each of the one or more control windings wound around at least a portion of at least one of the one or more magnetic cores; a control circuit electrically coupled to the one or more control windings, the control circuit controls a flow of direct current through the one or more control windings which causes a biasing magnetic flux in the one or more magnetic cores; one or more power windings, each of the one or more power windings wound around at least a portion of at least one of the one or more magnetic cores, the one or more power windings which in operation receive alternating current from an alternating current supply; a plurality of solid-state light sources electrically coupled to the one or more power windings; and a rectifier electrically coupled to the one or more power windings and to the plurality of solid-state light sources, wherein in operation the rectifier provides a direct current to drive the plurality of solid-state light sources.

The plurality of solid-state light sources may be light emitting diodes (LEDs). In operation the one more power windings may receive alternating current from the alternating current supply that operates at approximately 50 or 60 Hertz. The illumination system may further include: a feedback circuit that communicatively couples a feedback current to the control circuit which controls a flow of direct current through the plurality of solid-state light sources to a defined instantaneous level. The feedback circuit may be electrically isolated from the plurality of solid-state light sources. The control circuit may implement a power factor correction transfer function which controls the flow of direct current through the one or more control windings which controls the flow of alternating current through the one or more power windings in a manner which improves the power factor of the illumination system. The control circuit may receive a measure of at least one of an input voltage or a phase angle of the alternating current supply. The control circuit may include at least one microcontroller that implements the power factor correction transfer function. The control circuit may include at least one non-transitory processor-readable storage medium that stores the power factor correction transfer function, and which is communicatively coupled to the microcontroller, and wherein the microcontroller receives a measure of at least one of an input voltage or a phase angle of the alternating current supply, and uses the measure to index into a table of direct current control output values and retrieve a direct current control output value that corrects the power factor of the power delivered to the plurality of solid-state light sources. The illumination system may further include: a power factor correction capacitor electrically coupled across terminals of the alternating current supply. The one or more power windings may not electrically galvanically isolate the plurality of solid-state light sources from the alternating current supply. The one or more power windings may electrically galvanically isolate the plurality of solid-state light sources from the alternating current supply. More than one set of power windings may drive a plurality of separated solid-state light sources controlled by one or more common or separate control windings. The illumination system may further include: a flicker control circuit comprising a passive resonating circuit electrically coupled to the rectifier to increase a frequency of an output signal of the rectifier to a frequency that is sufficiently high that a flicker from the

plurality of solid-state light sources is undetectable by an unaided human eye. The rectifier may include at least two solid-state rectifiers. The rectifier may include at least four solid-state rectifiers. The one or more magnetic cores may include a magnet core having a plurality of legs, the one or more control windings wound around a first leg, the one or more power windings wound around a second leg different from the first leg. The one or more magnetic cores may include at least two magnetic cores, the one or more control windings are wound around at least a portion of each of the at least two magnetic cores, and the one or more power windings are wound around at least a portion of each of the at least two magnetic cores.

A drive circuit to drive a plurality of solid-state light sources of an illumination system may be summarized as including: a magnetic core; a control windings wound around at least a portion of the magnetic core; a control circuit electrically coupled to the control winding, the control circuit controls a flow of direct current through the control winding which causes a biasing magnetic flux in the magnetic core; a power winding wound around at least a portion of the magnetic core; a rectifier electrically coupled to the power winding and to the plurality of solid-state light sources; and wherein in operation the power winding receives alternating current from an alternating current supply and delivers direct current to the plurality of solid-state light sources via the rectifier.

A method of operation for an illumination system including a plurality of solid-state light sources may be summarized as including: receiving an alternating current signal at an input terminal; rectifying the alternating current signal with a rectifier; providing the rectified current signal to the plurality of solid-state light sources via one or more power windings wound around one or more magnetic cores; and selectively controlling a flow of direct current through one or more control windings wound around the one or more magnetic cores to control the rectified current signal provided to the plurality of solid-state light sources.

Receiving an alternating current signal at an input terminal may include receiving an alternating current signal that operates at approximately 50 or 60 Hertz. The method may further include: receiving a feedback signal indicative of direct current that flows through the plurality of solid-state light sources; and wherein selectively controlling a flow of direct current through one or more control windings may include selectively controlling a flow of direct current through one or more control windings based at least in part on the received feedback signal. Receiving a feedback signal indicative of direct current that flows through the plurality of solid-state light sources may include receiving a feedback signal that is electrically isolated from the plurality of solid-state light sources. The method may further include: implementing a power factor correction transfer function which controls the flow of direct current through the one or more control windings which controls the flow of alternating current through the one or more power windings in a manner which improves the power factor of the illumination system. The method may further include: receiving a signal indicative of at least one of an input voltage or a phase angle of the alternating current signal. The method may further include: increasing a frequency of the rectified current signal with a resonant network including passive electrical elements to reduce a detectability of amplitude variations in the rectified current signal by an unaided human eye as emitted by the plurality of solid-state light sources. Rectifying the alternating current signal may include rectifying the alternating current signal with at least two solid-state rectifiers. Rectifying the alternating current

signal may include rectifying the alternating current signal with at least four solid-state rectifiers.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

In the drawings, identical reference numbers identify similar elements or acts. The sizes and relative positions of elements in the drawings are not necessarily drawn to scale. For example, the shapes of various elements and angles are not drawn to scale, and some of these elements are arbitrarily enlarged and positioned to improve drawing legibility. Further, the particular shapes of the elements as drawn, are not intended to convey any information regarding the actual shape of the particular elements, and have been solely selected for ease of recognition in the drawings.

FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram of an illumination system having a drive circuit that employs a magnetic amplifier with a magnetic core and a feedback circuit to form a power converter that powers solid-state light sources, according to at least one illustrated embodiment.

FIG. 2 is a schematic diagram of an illumination system having a drive circuit that employs a magnetic amplifier with two magnetic cores and a feedback circuit to form a power converter that powers solid-state light sources, according to at least one illustrated embodiment.

FIG. 3 is a schematic diagram of a portion of a control system for an illumination system that includes an optically isolated feedback system, according to at least one illustrated embodiment.

FIG. 4 is a schematic diagram of an illumination system that includes a passive resonant circuit, according to at least one illustrated embodiment.

FIG. 5A is a schematic diagram of a passive resonant circuit of an illumination system, according to at least one illustrated embodiment.

FIG. 5B is a schematic diagram of a passive resonant circuit of an illumination system, according to at least one illustrated embodiment.

FIG. 5C is a schematic diagram of a passive resonant circuit of an illumination system, according to at least one illustrated embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In the following description, certain specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of various disclosed embodiments. However, one skilled in the relevant art will recognize that embodiments may be practiced without one or more of these specific details, or with other methods, components, materials, etc. In other instances, well-known structures associated with the various embodiments have not been shown or described in detail to avoid unnecessarily obscuring descriptions of the embodiments.

Unless the context requires otherwise, throughout the specification and claims that follow, the word “comprising” is synonymous with “including,” and is inclusive or open-ended (i.e., does not exclude additional, unrecited elements or method acts).

Reference throughout this specification to “one embodiment” or “an embodiment” means that a particular feature, structure or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment. Thus, the appearances of the phrases “in one embodiment” or “in an embodiment” in various places throughout this specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment. Furthermore, the particular features, structures, or character-

istics may be combined in any suitable manner in one or more embodiments. Additionally, the terms “lighting,” “luminous output” and “illumination” are used herein interchangeably. For instance, the phrases “level of illumination” or “level of light output” have the same meanings. In addition, for instance, the phrases “illumination source” and “light source” have the same meanings.

As used in this specification and the appended claims, the singular forms “a,” “an,” and “the” include plural referents unless the content clearly dictates otherwise. It should also be noted that the term “or” is generally employed in its broadest sense, that is, as meaning “and/or” unless the content clearly dictates otherwise.

The headings and Abstract of the Disclosure provided herein are for convenience only and do not interpret the scope or meaning of the embodiments.

Implementations of the present disclosure are directed to lighting or illumination systems having drive circuits that employ a magnetic amplifier (“mag-amp”) and one or more feedback circuits to form a power converter that powers solid-state light sources.

Generally, the drive circuits disclosed herein utilize a magnetic amplifier that includes one or more magnetic cores which provides a controllable reluctance for magnetic flux. The magnetic amplifiers include one or more power windings which receive energy from an alternating current (AC) supply (e.g., AC mains) and delivers rectified AC current as direct current (DC) to one or more solid-state light sources. The magnetic amplifiers also include one or more control windings coupled to a DC control source. The one or more control windings provide a control current that generates biasing magnetic flux to control the magnetic saturation of the one or more magnetic cores. The amount of control current fed into the control winding by the DC control source sets the voltage on the one or more power windings used to power the one or more solid-state light sources.

The drive circuits may have two or more rectifiers (e.g., solid-state rectifiers) to provide a direct current to drive the solid-state light sources (e.g., LEDs) and also to isolate the one or more control windings from interference from the magnetic flux of the one or more power windings.

Advantageously, the drive circuits disclosed herein may operate at a low frequency (e.g., 50 Hertz, 60 Hertz) compared to switch mode power controllers which operate at tens or hundreds of kilohertz. Thus, the drive circuits discussed herein generate almost no electromagnetic interference (EMI).

The drive circuits disclosed herein also have few components compared to traditional switch mode solid-state light source power converters, thereby enhancing operational life and providing high reliability. Due to the large inductances present in AC power sources, the drive circuits disclosed herein also have substantial inherent resistance to AC spikes and transients, for example, lightning-induced transient voltages and currents, making surge protection circuitry less expensive.

In some implementations, a feedback current may be applied to the one or more control windings to set the flow of current through the solid-state light sources to an appropriate instantaneous level. In some implementations, this feedback may be electrically isolated (e.g., optical isolation, magnetic isolation) from the solid-state light sources.

FIG. 1 shows a schematic diagram of a lighting or illumination system 100 that utilizes a magnetic amplifier to drive a plurality of solid-state light sources 102 (e.g., light emitting diodes (LEDs), organic LEDs (OLEDs), polymer LEDs (PLEDs)). The plurality of solid-state light sources 102 may

include any number of light sources (e.g., 10 light sources, 50 light sources). The illumination system 100 includes a magnetic core 104 that comprises three legs: a left leg 106, a center leg 108 and a right leg 110. A control winding 112 is wound around the center leg 108 of the magnetic core 104. The magnetic core 104 is a saturable reactor in the sense that the core can be deliberately saturated by a direct electric current in the control winding 112. Once saturated, the inductance of the magnetic core 104 drops dramatically, which decreases the inductive reactance of the core allows for increased flow of alternating current, as discussed further below.

The illumination system 100 also includes power windings 114, 116 wound around the left leg 106 and the right leg 110, respectively, of the magnetic core 104. The power windings 114, 116 are electrically coupled to an alternating current supply 118 (e.g., AC mains). The power windings 114, 116 are also electrically coupled to the plurality of solid-state light sources 102 through rectifiers 120, 122, respectively. In some implementations, the rectifiers 120, 122 are solid-state rectifiers (e.g., diodes).

Equal turns in the power windings 114, 116 set up equal AC magnetomotive forces which cancel in the center leg 108. Thus, no fundamental AC voltage is induced in the control winding 112, but DC flux flows in both the left leg 106 and the right leg 110 of the magnetic core 104. A change of direct current in the control winding 112 causes a change in the total flux linking the power windings 114, 116 and hence a change in inductance.

The control winding 112 is electrically coupled to a controller or control circuit 124 at a control output CTRL1 thereof. In the illustrated implementation, the control circuit 124 is in the form of a microcontroller that includes one or more processors 126 and one or more nontransitory processor- or computer-readable storage media 128 coupled to the one or more processors. The control circuit 124 is operative to control the flow of direct current in the control winding 112, which controls the current flow through the power windings 114, 116 that is used to drive the solid-state light sources 102.

In some implementations, the control circuit 124 may include an analog circuit, a digital circuit, or a combination thereof. The processor 126 may be implemented as one or more microprocessors, microcomputers, microcontrollers, digital signal processors, central processing units, state machines, logic circuitries, and/or any devices that manipulate signals based on operational instructions. Among other capabilities, the processor 126 fetches and executes processor-readable instructions stored in a nontransitory memory.

In the illustrated implementation, a sense resistor R_{SENSE} is provided in series with the plurality of solid-state light sources 102. A feedback input FB1 of the control circuit 124 is electrically coupled across the sense resistor R_{SENSE} to sense a voltage drop across the sense resistor. The sensed feedback signal may be used by the one or more processors 126 of the control circuit 124 to determine an instantaneous current flowing through the plurality of solid-state light sources 102.

Using the feedback signal from the sense resistor R_{SENSE} , the control circuit 124 may selectively control the current in the control winding 112 to control the current in the power windings 114, 116 that drives the solid-state light sources 102. Thus, the solid-state light sources 102 may be selectively turned ON, turned OFF or dimmed by the control circuit 124.

In some implementations, a transfer function may be implemented in the control circuit 124 which controls the control current in the control winding 112 such that the power windings 114, 116 control the current flow to the solid-state

light sources **102** in a manner which makes the power factor (PF) of the illumination system **100** to be substantially closer to the ideal PF of one (1) than would be the case with a feedback circuit which only represented the current flowing through the solid-state light sources. In some implementations, this power factor correction (PFC) transfer function is implemented using a processor-based controller, such as a microcontroller. For example, a microcontroller may implement the PFC transfer function using one or more lookup tables, one or more equations or models, etc.

In some implementations, the PFC transfer function is stored in the nontransitory processor-readable storage medium **128** and the control circuit **124** senses or measures an input voltage and/or phase angle of the AC supply at a feedback input FB2. The processor **126** of the control circuit **124** may utilize the measured input voltage and/or phase angle to determine the control current output value to provide at the control output CTRL1 that corrects the power factor. For example, the control circuit **124** may use the measured value or values to index into a table of control current output values and retrieve the control current value that corrects the power factor.

FIG. 2 shows a schematic diagram for another implementation of a lighting or illumination system **200**. For the sake of brevity, a description will not be repeated for features having the same reference numbers as features illustrated in FIG. 1. The illumination system **200** includes two magnetic cores **202**, **204** which are provided with control windings **206**, **208**, respectively, and power windings **210**, **212**, respectively. A plurality of solid-state light sources **102** is electrically coupled in series with an AC source **118** (e.g., AC mains). The power windings **210**, **212** are coupled in parallel with each other. Rectifiers **214**, **216**, **218**, **220** are coupled to the power windings **210**, **212** to form a bridge rectifier **222** which provides direct current to drive the plurality of solid-state light sources **102** during operation.

The control circuit **124** is electrically coupled to the control windings **206**, **208**. As noted above, the control circuit **124** utilizes a feedback signal received at feedback input FB1 to control the direct current in the control windings **206**, **208** which in turn controls the current in the power windings **210**, **212** supplied to the light source **102**.

In the implementation shown in FIG. 2, a capacitor C_{PFC} is electrically coupled across the AC supply **118**. The capacitor C_{PFC} operates as a reactive current generator, which improves the power factor of the illumination system **200**, thereby reducing the total amount of power used by the illumination system during operation.

FIG. 3 shows a partial schematic view of a lighting or illumination system **300** that includes an optical isolator or optocoupler **302** disposed between the sensor resistor R_{SENSE} and the feedback input FB1 of the control circuit **124**. The optocoupler **302** operates to electrically isolate the solid-state light sources **102** from the control circuit **124**. In the illustrated implementation, the optocoupler **302** includes an LED **304** and a phototransistor **306** disposed proximate the LED (e.g., in the same opaque package). Other types of optical source-sensor combinations may include LED-photodiode, LED-light activated silicon-controlled rectifier (LASCR), lamp-photoresistor pairs, etc. In some implementations, the light source **102** may be electrically isolated from the control circuit using other types of isolation, such as inductive isolation (e.g., isolation transformer).

In some implementations, the power windings are such that the solid-state light source (e.g., LED(s)) load is not electrically galvanically isolated from the AC supply. In some implementations, the power windings are such that the solid-

state light source (e.g., LED(s)) load is electrically galvanically isolated from the AC supply to obtain a Class II or higher safety rating. Such may be implemented using an isolation transformer, for example. In some implementations, more than one set of power windings are used to drive separated solid-state light source loads (e.g., LED(s)) that are controlled by common or separate control windings.

FIG. 4 shows a lighting or illumination system **400**, according to another implementation. The illumination system **400** includes a solid-state light source **102**, an alternating current (AC) power supply **118**, an AC signal conditioner or rectifier circuit **222**, one or more magnetic cores **402**, and a passive resonating circuit **404**. As shown in dashed lines, the passive resonating circuit **404** may be electrically coupled between the one or more magnetic cores **402** and the light source **102** instead of between the rectifier circuit **222** and the magnetic core(s). The passive resonating circuit **404** may be operative to decrease perceived optical flicker in the solid-state light source **102**.

The solid-state light source **102** may include a string of LEDs. Each of the LEDs may have a forward voltage drop in the range of 2.5-4.5 volts, for example. A voltage applied to an LED that is below this range may be insufficient to cause the LED to emit light, and a voltage applied to an LED that is above this range may render the LED inoperable or may significantly reduce the lifespan of the LED. Thus, for example a continuous string of 40 LEDs that are connected electrically in series may operate by receiving a voltage in the range of 100-180 volts (i.e., 2.5 volts \times 40 to 4.5 volts \times 40). According to other implementations, the solid-state light source **102** may include multiple strings of LEDs with each of the strings of LEDs electrically coupled in parallel to each of the other strings of LEDs.

The power supply **118** supplies an AC power signal consisting of a voltage and a current to a node **406**. The frequency and amplitude of the AC power signal supplied by the power supply **118** may span a range of values. The frequency of the AC power signal may be any frequency greater than 30 hertz, for example. The power supply **118** may supply AC voltage and current at, for example, 50 hertz in some parts of the world or 60 hertz in North America. Alternatively, the power supply **118** may supply the AC power signal as a rectified alternating current.

The amplitude of the AC voltage supplied by the power supply **118** may span a wide range of values. The amplitude of the AC voltage may range from 3 volts to several-hundred volts, depending upon the characteristics of the light source **102**. For example, an AC voltage having an amplitude of 3 volts may be desirable when the light source **102** is a single LED or includes multiple LEDs coupled electrically in parallel. In North America, the amplitude of the AC voltage supplied to light fixtures and receptacles is approximately 170 volts zero-to-peak, or approximately 110-120 volts root-mean-squared (rms) zero-to-peak. Accordingly, the voltage supplied to a typical North American light receptacle (~120 Vrms) is suitable to meet the operational range (141-187 volts zero to peak) of a string of 50 LEDs as determined by a forward-voltage range of 2.5-4.5 volts per each LED, typically 3.25V at rated LED current.

The AC conditioning circuit **222** may be coupled to the AC power supply **118** at the node **406** to receive the AC power signal. From the AC power signal, the AC conditioning circuit **222** may generate a rectified output signal having a frequency that is twice the frequency of the received AC power signal. Alternatively, the AC conditioning circuit **222** may be configured to generate a rectified output signal having a frequency that is greater than the frequency of the received AC

power signal that is already a rectified alternating current signal. The frequency is determined by inverting a period of the rectified output signal. A period of the rectified output signal is the time elapsed between one amplitude maximum (voltage or current) to a next amplitude maximum.

The AC conditioning circuit **222** may be a passive circuit, such as a full-wave diode rectifier bridge, as illustrated. Diodes **D1-D4** may be configured, as known in the art, to receive the AC power signal and generate the rectified output signal. Although rectified power signals are commonly considered to be direct current (DC) signals, the rectified output signal will be referred to as having a frequency that is the reciprocal of the period, discussed above.

The AC conditioning circuit **222** may generate the rectified output signal at a first frequency at a node **408** with reference to a node **410**. The passive resonating circuit **404** may be electrically coupled to the AC conditioning circuit **222** to receive the rectified output signal at the node **408**. Examples of the passive resonating circuit **404** are shown in FIGS. **5A-5C** and are discussed below.

FIG. **5A** shows a schematic diagram of an implementation of a passive resonating circuit **500**. The passive resonating circuit **500** may include an inductor **L1** electrically coupled or directly connected to the node **408** (FIG. **4**). The passive resonating circuit **500** may also include a capacitor **C1** electrically coupled or directly connected between the node **410** (FIG. **4**) and the inductor **L1**.

The values of the passive components of the passive resonating circuit **500** may be selected or set to cause the passive resonating circuit to resonate at the first frequency of the rectified output signal. In other words, the values of the inductor **L1** and the capacitor **C1** may be selected or set to have a resonant frequency that is approximately twice the frequency of the AC power signal from the AC power source **118**. Typically, an LC circuit resonates at a frequency in which the impedance of the inductor ($Z_L=j\omega L$) summed with the impedance of the capacitor ($Z_C=1/(j\omega C)$) is equal to zero.

The resonant frequency f of an LC circuit may be determined mathematically as follows:

$$f = \frac{1}{(2\pi\sqrt{L1 * C1})}$$

According to one implementation, the inductor **L1** has an inductance of 88 millihenries and the capacitor **C1** has an inductance of 20 microfarads, so that the resonant frequency f is 120 hertz. The inductor **L1** may be a ferrite core or laminated iron core inductor with a single winding, for example. The inductor **L1** may also be constructed with two windings on a single shared core. The capacitor **C1** may be an electrolytic, ceramic, tantalum, polypropylene film, or polyester metal film capacitor. Other values may be chosen for the inductor **L1** and the capacitor **C1** to achieve the desired frequency. Furthermore, the values of inductor **L1** and capacitor **C1** may be selected or set to produce resonant frequencies that are higher than, or lower than, or twice the frequency of the AC power signal from the AC power source **118**. For example, in Europe where the AC power source **118** generates the AC power signal at 50 hertz, and the AC conditioning circuit **222** generates a rectified output signal at 100 hertz, a capacitor **C1** with a 27 microfarad capacitance may be used to cause the passive resonating circuit **500** to have a resonating frequency f of approximately 103 hertz.

The passive resonating circuit **500** may multiply the frequency of the rectified output signal at the node **408** (FIG. **4**)

from the first frequency to a second frequency. In the absence of the passive resonating circuit **500**, the rectified output signal may have a first frequency of 120 hertz at the node **408**. The addition of the passive resonating circuit **500** that is excited by the 120 hertz rectified output signal may multiply the frequency of the rectified output signal at the node **408** from a first frequency of 120 hertz to a second frequency of 240 hertz. In countries supplying a 50 hertz AC power signal, the passive resonating circuit **500** may multiply the frequency of the rectified output signal at the node **408** from a first frequency of 100 hertz to, for example, a second frequency of 200 hertz. Thus, the passive resonating circuit **500** multiplies the frequency of the rectified output signal from a first frequency that is, for example, twice as high as the frequency of the AC power signal to a second frequency that is, for example, at least four-times as high as the frequency of the AC power signal. Accordingly, the illumination system **400** may receive an AC power signal having a frequency that is greater than 30 hertz and may multiply the frequency of that signal to exceed the 120 hertz threshold at which flicker has been determined to no longer be physiologically or visually perceived by humans.

FIG. **5B** shows a schematic diagram for another implementation of a passive resonating circuit **502**. The passive resonating circuit **502** may be electrically coupled to the AC conditioning circuit **222** to receive the rectified output signal at the node **408** (FIG. **4**). The passive resonating circuit **502** may include an inductor **L2** electrically coupled or directly connected to the node **408** and a capacitor **C2** electrically coupled or directly connected between a node **506** and the inductor **L2**. An inductor **L3** may also be electrically coupled or directly connected between the node **408** and the node **506**. A capacitor **C3** may be electrically coupled or connected to the capacitor **C2** and the inductor **L3** at the node **506**. The capacitor **C3** may also be connected to the node **410**.

The passive resonating circuit **502** may be configured to resonate at the first frequency of the rectified output signal. In other words, the values of the inductors **L2** and **L3** and the capacitors **C2** and **C3** may be selected or set so as to produce a resonant frequency that is, for example, approximately twice the frequency of the AC power signal from the AC power source **118**.

According to one implementation, the inductance of the inductor **L2** is 10 millihenries, the inductance of the inductor **L3** is 10 millihenries, the capacitance of the capacitor **C2** is 20 microfarads, and the capacitance of the capacitor **C3** is 100 microfarads, so that the passive resonating circuit **502** at least partially resonates at a frequency of approximately 120 hertz. Each of the inductors **L2**, **L3** may be implemented with a single-winding inductor or with a multiple-winding inductor. The capacitor **C2** may be a polyester film capacitor. The capacitor **C3** may be an electrolytic capacitor. Inductors **L2**, **L3** and/or capacitors **C2**, **C3** with other values may be selected or chosen to excite the passive resonating circuit **502** at a desired frequency. Furthermore, the values of the inductors **L2**, **L3** and the capacitors **C2**, **C3** may be selected or set to cause the passive resonating circuit **502** to resonate at frequencies that are higher, or lower, than the first frequency of the signal output, so as to decrease the magnitude of the response of the passive resonating circuit **502** to the first frequency of the rectified output signal.

The passive resonating circuit **502** may multiply the frequency of the rectified output signal at the node **408** from the first frequency to the second frequency. Exciting the passive resonating circuit **502** with a 100-120 Hertz rectified output signal may result in multiplication of the frequency of the rectified output signal at the node **408** from a first frequency

of 100-120 hertz to a second frequency of 200-240 hertz. Accordingly, the passive resonating circuit **502** multiplies the frequency of the rectified output signal from a first frequency that is, for example, twice as high as the frequency of the AC power signal (50-60 hertz) to a second frequency that is, for example, at least four-times as high as the frequency of the AC power signal.

The passive resonating circuit **502** may be implemented with smaller and less-expensive components than the passive resonating circuit **500**. The passive resonating circuit **502** may use lower-inductance inductors **L2**, **L3** in place of a single higher-inductance inductor **L1** to multiply the frequency of the rectified output signal. The lower-inductance inductors **L2**, **L3** may have a lower resistance than a single larger inductor, the employment thereof may therefore result in lower losses due to power dissipation in the passive resonating circuit **502**. The inductors **L2**, **L3** of the passive resonating circuit **502** may be both dimensionally smaller and lighter weight than the inductor **L1** of the passive resonating circuit **500**. Because the passive resonating circuit **500** or **502** is part of an illumination system and may be fitted into a housing, both weight and size of the components of the passive resonating circuit **500** or **502** influence the marketability of the illumination system **400**. Additionally, two lower-inductance inductors **L2**, **L3** may be less costly than that of a single higher-inductance inductor **L1**. The illumination system **400** may be implemented with passive components having tolerances of up to 20% and still operate as desired.

FIG. **5C** shows a schematic diagram for another implementation of a passive resonating circuit **504**. The passive resonating circuit **504** may be electrically coupled to the AC conditioning circuit **222** to receive the rectified output signal at the node **408** (FIG. **4**). The passive resonating circuit **504** may include an inductor **L4** electrically coupled or directly connected between the node **408** and a node **508**. The passive resonating circuit **504** may also include a capacitor **C4** electrically coupled or directly connected between the node **408** and the node **508**. A pair of zener diodes **ZD1**, **ZD2** may be electrically coupled in parallel to the capacitor **C4**, such that a cathode terminal of the first zener diode **ZD1** is connected to the node **408**, a cathode terminal of the second zener diode **ZD2** is connected to the node **508**, and anode terminals of the pair of zener diodes **ZD1**, **ZD2** are connected together at a node **510**. A capacitor **C5** may also be electrically coupled or connected to the capacitor **C4**, the inductor **L4**, and the cathode terminal of the second zener diode **ZD2** at the node **508**. The capacitor **C5** may also be connected to node **410** (FIG. **4**) or a voltage reference, such as ground or a voltage bias.

The passive resonating circuit **504** may be configured to resonate at the first frequency of the rectified output signal. In other words, the inductor **L4** and the capacitors **C4** and **C5** may be selected with values that cause the passive resonating circuit **504** to have a resonant frequency that is, for example, approximately twice the frequency of the AC power signal (50-60 hertz) from the AC power source **118**.

For instance, the inductance of the inductor **L4** is 10 millihenries, the capacitance of the capacitor **C4** is 40 microfarads, the capacitance of the capacitor **C5** is 200 microfarads, and the breakdown or reverse voltage of the zener diodes **ZD1**, **ZD2** is 33 volts so that the passive resonating circuit **504** resonates at a frequency of approximately 120 hertz. The inductor **L4** may be toroidal and may have multiple windings. The capacitor **C4** may be a polyester film capacitor. The capacitor **C5** may be an electrolytic capacitor. The inductor **L4** and the capacitors **C4**, **C5** may be selected with other inductance and capacitance values to excite the passive resonating circuit **504** at other frequencies.

The passive resonating circuit **504** may multiply the frequency of the rectified output signal at the node **408** from the first frequency to the second frequency. The passive resonating circuit **504** that is excited by a 100-120 hertz rectified output signal may multiply the frequency of the rectified output signal at the node **408** from a first frequency of, for example, 100-120 hertz to a second frequency of, for example, 200-240 hertz, or higher. Accordingly, the passive resonating circuit **504** multiplies the frequency of the rectified output signal from a first frequency that is, for example, twice as high as the frequency of the AC power signal (50-60 hertz) to a second frequency that is, for example, at least four-times as high as the frequency of the AC power signal.

Advantageously, the passive resonating circuit **504** may be implemented with smaller and less-expensive components than the previously illustrated passive resonating circuits **500** and **502**. The passive resonating circuit **504** may use a single inductor **L4** that is significantly smaller than the inductor **L1** of the passive resonating circuit **500** and that is one less component than the two inductors **L2**, **L3** of the passive resonating circuit **502**. Thus, the use of the single inductor **L1** results in a lower resistance and lower power dissipation in the passive resonator circuit **504** than may be exhibited by passive resonator circuits **500** and **502**. Additionally, two zener diodes **ZD1**, **ZD2** may be significantly lighter and less expensive than a single larger inductance (e.g., 10 millihenries) inductor, so the passive resonating circuit **504** may be lighter and less costly to manufacture than the passive resonating circuit **502**.

The foregoing detailed description has set forth various embodiments of the devices and/or processes via the use of block diagrams, schematics, and examples. Insofar as such block diagrams, schematics, and examples contain one or more functions and/or operations, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that each function and/or operation within such block diagrams, flowcharts, or examples can be implemented, individually and/or collectively, by a wide range of hardware, software, firmware, or virtually any combination thereof. In one implementation, the present subject matter may be implemented via Application Specific Integrated Circuits (ASICs). However, those skilled in the art will recognize that the embodiments disclosed herein, in whole or in part, can be equivalently implemented in standard integrated circuits, as one or more computer programs running on one or more computers (e.g., as one or more programs running on one or more computer systems), as one or more programs running on one or more controllers (e.g., microcontrollers), as one or more programs running on one or more processors (e.g., microprocessors), as firmware, or as virtually any combination thereof, and that designing the circuitry and/or writing the code for the software and/or firmware would be well within the skill of one of ordinary skill in the art in light of this disclosure.

Those of skill in the art will recognize that many of the methods or algorithms set out herein may employ additional acts, may omit some acts, and/or may execute acts in a different order than specified.

In addition, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the mechanisms taught herein are capable of being distributed as a program product in a variety of forms, and that an illustrative embodiment applies equally regardless of the particular type of signal bearing media used to actually carry out the distribution. Examples of signal bearing media include, but are not limited to, the following: recordable type media such as floppy disks, hard disk drives, CD ROMs, digital tape, and computer memory.

The various embodiments described above can be combined to provide further embodiments. To the extent that they are not inconsistent with the specific teachings and definitions herein, all of the U.S. patents, U.S. patent application publications, and U.S. patent applications referred to in this specification and/or listed in the Application Data Sheet, including but not limited to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/052,924, filed May 13, 2008; U.S. Patent Publication No. US 2009/0284155, published Nov. 19, 2009; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/051,619, filed May 8, 2008; U.S. Pat. No. 8,118,456, issued Feb. 12, 2012; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/088,651, filed Aug. 13, 2008; U.S. Patent Publication No. US 2010/0090577, published Apr. 15, 2010; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/115,438, filed Nov. 17, 2008; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/154,619, filed Feb. 23, 2009; U.S. Patent Publication No. US2010/0123403, published May 20, 2010; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/174,913, filed May 1, 2009; U.S. Patent Publication No. US2010/0277082, published Nov. 4, 2010; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/180,017, filed May 20, 2009; U.S. Patent Publication No. US2010/0295946, published Nov. 25, 2010; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/229,435, filed Jul. 29, 2009; U.S. Patent Publication No. US2011/0026264, published Feb. 3, 2011; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/295,519, filed Jan. 15, 2010; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/406,490, filed Oct. 25, 2010; U.S. Patent Publication No. US2011/0175518, published Jul. 21, 2011; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/333,983, filed May 12, 2010; U.S. Patent Publication No. US2010/0295454, published Nov. 25, 2010; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/346,263, filed May 19, 2010; U.S. Patent Publication No. US2010/0295455, published Nov. 25, 2010; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/357,421, filed Jun. 22, 2010; U.S. Patent Publication No. US2011/0310605, published Dec. 22, 2011; U.S. Patent Publication No. 2012/0262069, published Oct. 18, 2012; U.S. Non-Provisional patent application Ser. No. 13/212,074, filed Aug. 17, 2011; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/527,029, filed Aug. 24, 2011; U.S. Non-Provisional patent application Ser. No. 13/592,590, filed Aug. 23, 2012; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/534,722, filed Sep. 14, 2011; U.S. Non-Provisional patent application Ser. No. 13/619,085, filed Sep. 14, 2012; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/567,308, filed Dec. 6, 2011; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/561,616, filed Nov. 18, 2011; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/641,781, filed May 2, 2012; U.S. Non-Provisional patent application Ser. No. 13/411,321, filed Mar. 2, 2012; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/640,963, filed May 1, 2012; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/764,395, filed Feb. 13, 2013; U.S. Non-Provisional patent application Ser. No. 13/558,191, filed Jul. 25, 2012; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/692,619, filed Aug. 23, 2012; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/694,159, filed Aug. 28, 2012; U.S. Non-Provisional patent application Ser. No. 13/604,327, filed Sep. 5, 2012; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/723,675, filed Nov. 7, 2012; U.S. Non-Provisional patent application Ser. No. 13/679,687, filed Nov. 16, 2012; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/728,150, filed Nov. 19, 2012; U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/764,395, filed Feb. 13, 2013; Provisional patent application Ser. No. 13/786,114, filed Mar. 5, 2013; U.S. Non-Provisional patent application Ser. No. 13/786,332, filed Mar. 5, 2013; U.S. Non-Provisional patent application Ser. No. 13/875,000, filed May 1, 2013; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/849,841, filed Jul. 24,

2013; U.S. Provisional patent application Ser. No. 13/973,696, filed Aug. 22, 2013; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/878,425, filed Sep. 16, 2013; U.S. Non-Provisional patent application Ser. No. 14/074,166, filed Nov. 7, 2013; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/905,699, filed Nov. 18, 2013; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/933,733, filed Jan. 30, 2014; U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/057,419, filed Sep. 30, 2014, U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/905,699, filed Nov. 18, 2013, and U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/068,517, filed Oct. 24, 2014; are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety. Aspects of the embodiments can be modified, if necessary, to employ systems, circuits and concepts of the various patents, applications and publications to provide yet further embodiments.

These and other changes can be made to the embodiments in light of the above-detailed description. In general, in the following claims, the terms used should not be construed to limit the claims to the specific embodiments disclosed in the specification and the claims, but should be construed to include all possible embodiments along with the full scope of equivalents to which such claims are entitled. Accordingly, the claims are not limited by the disclosure.

The invention claimed is:

1. An illumination system, comprising:

one or more magnetic cores;

one or more control windings, each of the one or more control windings wound around at least a portion of at least one of the one or more magnetic cores;

a control circuit electrically coupled to the one or more control windings, the control circuit controls a flow of direct current through the one or more control windings which causes a biasing magnetic flux in the one or more magnetic cores;

one or more power windings, each of the one or more power windings wound around at least a portion of at least one of the one or more magnetic cores, the one or more power windings which in operation receive alternating current from an alternating current supply;

a plurality of solid-state light sources electrically coupled to the one or more power windings;

a rectifier electrically coupled to the one or more power windings and to the plurality of solid-state light sources, wherein in operation the rectifier provides a direct current to drive the plurality of solid-state light sources; and

a flicker control circuit comprising a passive resonating circuit electrically coupled to the rectifier to increase a frequency of an output signal of the rectifier to a frequency that is sufficiently high that a flicker from the plurality of solid-state light sources is undetectable by an unaided human eye.

2. The illumination system of claim 1 wherein the plurality of solid-state light sources are light emitting diodes (LEDs).

3. The illumination system of claim 1 wherein in operation the one more power windings receive alternating current from the alternating current supply that operates at approximately 50 or 60 Hertz.

4. The illumination system of claim 1, further comprising: a feedback circuit that communicatively couples a feedback current to the control circuit which controls a flow of direct current through the plurality of solid-state light sources to a defined instantaneous level.

5. The illumination system of claim 4 wherein the feedback circuit is electrically isolated from the plurality of solid-state light sources.

6. The illumination system of claim 4 wherein the control circuit implements a power factor correction transfer function

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which controls the flow of direct current through the one or more control windings which controls the flow of alternating current through the one or more power windings in a manner which improves the power factor of the illumination system.

7. The illumination system of claim 6 wherein the control circuit receives a measure of at least one of an input voltage or a phase angle of the alternating current supply.

8. The illumination system of claim 6 wherein the control circuit includes at least one microcontroller that implements the power factor correction transfer function.

9. An illumination system, comprising:

one or more magnetic cores;

one or more control windings, each of the one or more control windings wound around at least a portion of at least one of the one or more magnetic cores;

a control circuit electrically coupled to the one or more control windings, the control circuit controls a flow of direct current through the one or more control windings which causes a biasing magnetic flux in the one or more magnetic cores;

one or more power windings, each of the one or more power windings wound around at least a portion of at least one of the one or more magnetic cores, the one or more power windings which in operation receive alternating current from an alternating current supply;

a plurality of solid-state light sources electrically coupled to the one or more power windings;

a rectifier electrically coupled to the one or more power windings and to the plurality of solid-state light sources, wherein in operation the rectifier provides a direct current to drive the plurality of solid-state light sources; and a feedback circuit that communicatively couples a feedback current to the control circuit which controls a flow of direct current through the plurality of solid-state light sources to a defined instantaneous level,

wherein the control circuit implements a power factor correction transfer function which controls the flow of direct current through the one or more control windings which controls the flow of alternating current through the one or more power windings in a manner which improves the power factor of the illumination system, the control circuit includes at least one microcontroller that implements the power factor correction transfer function, and the control circuit includes at least one nontransitory processor-readable storage medium that stores the power factor correction transfer function, and which is communicatively coupled to the at least one microcontroller, and wherein the at least one microcontroller receives a measure of at least one of an input voltage or a phase angle of the alternating current supply, and uses the measure to index into a table of direct current control output values and retrieve a direct current control output value that corrects the power factor of the power delivered to the plurality of solid-state light sources.

10. The illumination system of claim 1, further comprising: a power factor correction capacitor electrically coupled across terminals of the alternating current supply.

11. The illumination system of claim 1 wherein the one or more power windings do not electrically galvanically isolate the plurality of solid-state light sources from the alternating current supply.

12. The illumination system of claim 1 wherein the one or more power windings electrically galvanically isolate the plurality of solid-state light sources from the alternating current supply.

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13. The illumination system of claim 1 wherein more than one set of power windings drive a plurality of separated solid-state light sources controlled by one or more common or separate control windings.

14. The illumination system of claim 1 wherein the rectifier comprises at least two solid-state rectifiers.

15. The illumination system of claim 1 wherein the rectifier comprises at least four solid-state rectifiers.

16. The illumination system of claim 1 wherein the one or more magnetic cores comprises a magnet core having a plurality of legs, the one or more control windings wound around a first leg, the one or more power windings wound around a second leg different from the first leg.

17. The illumination system of claim 1 wherein the one or more magnetic cores comprises at least two magnetic cores, the one or more control windings are wound around at least a portion of each of the at least two magnetic cores, and the one or more power windings are wound around at least a portion of each of the at least two magnetic cores.

18. A drive circuit to drive a plurality of solid-state light sources of an illumination system, the drive circuit comprising:

a magnetic core;

a control windings wound around at least a portion of the magnetic core;

a control circuit electrically coupled to the control winding, the control circuit controls a flow of direct current through the control winding which causes a biasing magnetic flux in the magnetic core;

a power winding wound around at least a portion of the magnetic core;

a rectifier electrically coupled to the power winding and to the plurality of solid-state light sources; and

a flicker control circuit comprising a passive resonating circuit electrically coupled to the rectifier to increase a frequency of an output signal of the rectifier to a frequency that is sufficiently high that a flicker from the plurality of solid-state light sources is undetectable by an unaided human eye,

wherein in operation the power winding receives alternating current from an alternating current supply and delivers direct current to the plurality of solid-state light sources via the rectifier.

19. A method of operation for an illumination system comprising a plurality of solid-state light sources, the method comprising:

receiving an alternating current signal at an input terminal; rectifying the alternating current signal with a rectifier;

providing the rectified current signal to the plurality of solid-state light sources via one or more power windings wound around one or more magnetic cores;

selectively controlling a flow of direct current through one or more control windings wound around the one or more magnetic cores to control the rectified current signal provided to the plurality of solid-state light sources; and increasing a frequency of the rectified current signal with a resonant network including passive electrical elements to reduce a detectability of amplitude variations in the rectified current signal by an unaided human eye as emitted by the plurality of solid-state light sources.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein receiving an alternating current signal at an input terminal comprises receiving an alternating current signal that operates at approximately 50 or 60 Hertz.

21. The method of claim **19**, further comprising:
receiving a feedback signal indicative of direct current that
flows through the plurality of solid-state light sources;
and

wherein selectively controlling a flow of direct current 5
through one or more control windings comprises selec-
tively controlling a flow of direct current through one or
more control windings based at least in part on the
received feedback signal.

22. The method of claim **21** wherein receiving a feedback 10
signal indicative of direct current that flows through the plu-
rality of solid-state light sources comprises receiving a feed-
back signal that is electrically isolated from the plurality of
solid-state light sources.

23. The method of claim **19**, further comprising: 15
implementing a power factor correction transfer function
which controls the flow of direct current through the one
or more control windings which controls the flow of
alternating current through the one or more power wind-
ings in a manner which improves the power factor of the 20
illumination system.

24. The method of claim **23**, further comprising:
receiving a signal indicative of at least one of an input
voltage or a phase angle of the alternating current signal.

25. The method of claim **19** wherein rectifying the alter- 25
nating current signal comprises rectifying the alternating cur-
rent signal with at least two solid-state rectifiers.

26. The method of claim **19** wherein rectifying the alter-
nating current signal comprises rectifying the alternating cur-
rent signal with at least four solid-state rectifiers. 30

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