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alkali-metal atoms, each carrier current signal having a substantially constant intensity;
 providing an RF modulation source adapted to output an RF modulated signal;
 rectifying and phase-shifting the RF modulated signal to produce two rectified and phase-shifted signals modulated 180 degrees out-of-phase with respect to each other;
 injecting the rectified and phase-shifted signals into the carrier current signals to produce alternating orthogonally polarized light from the first and second laser sources, thereby inducing sidebands on the carrier current signals separated by the hyperfine transition of the alkali-metal atoms;
 converting the alternating orthogonally polarized light emitted from the first and second laser sources into alternating left and right-handed circularly polarized light;
 optically pumping the alkali-metal atoms with the alternating left and right-handed circularly polarized light;
 and

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detecting the transmission of laser light through the vapor cavity.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein said first and second laser sources are VCSEL's.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the DC carrier current signal applied to each laser source is locked in a servo loop.

20. The method of claim 17, wherein said step of optically pumping the alkali-metal atoms with the alternating left and right-handed circularly polarized light includes the steps of:
 optically pumping a lower hyperfine multiplet of the alkali-metal atoms using left-handed circularly polarized light from the first laser source; and
 optically pumping an upper hyperfine multiplet of the alkali-metal atoms using right-handed circularly polarized light from the second laser source.

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