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F04B 53/00 (2006.01)(52) **U.S. Cl.** **417/313**(75) **Inventor: Ross Alan Tessien, Grass Valley, CA (US)**

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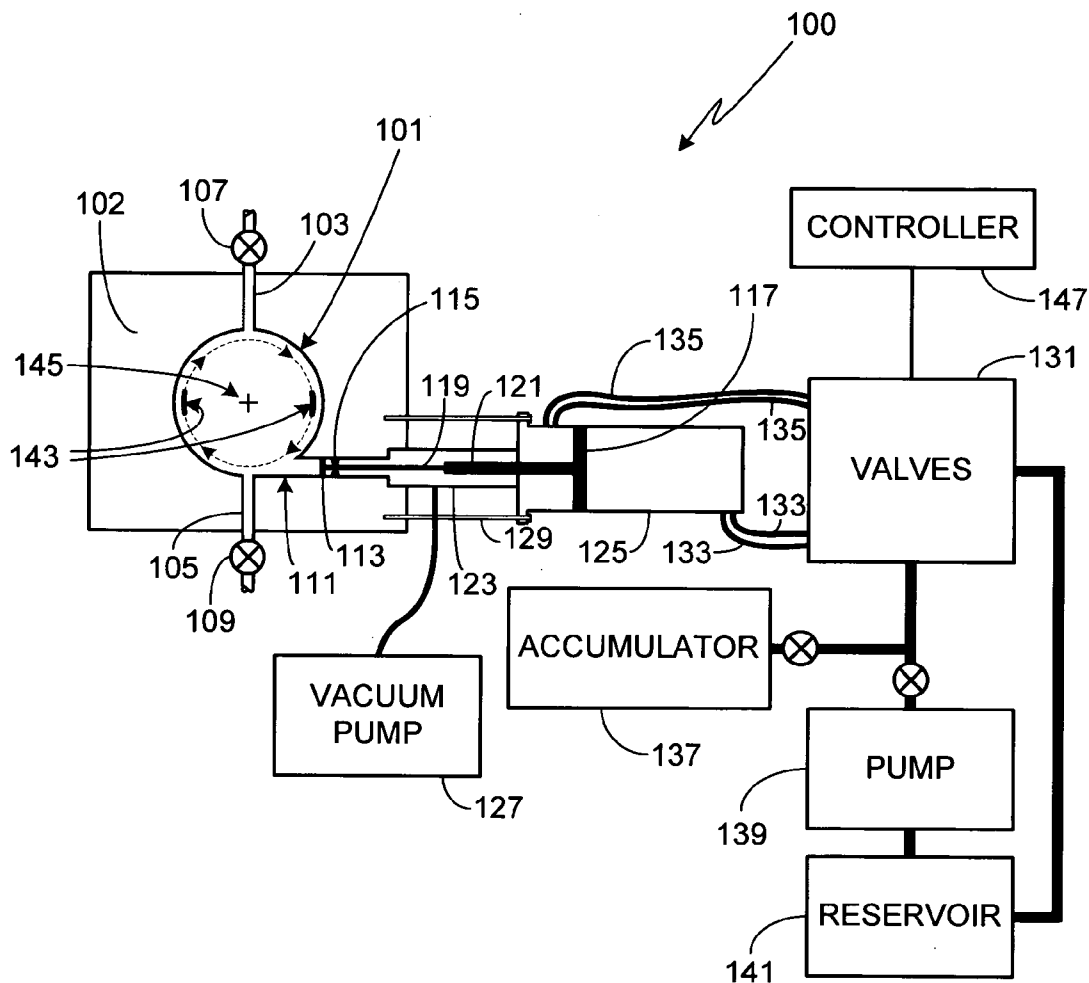
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(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 11/068,080, filed on Feb. 28, 2005.

Continuation-in-part of application No. 11/057,347, filed on Feb. 14, 2005, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 11/038,344, filed on Jan. 18, 2005.

ABSTRACT

A cavitation system for forming and imploding stabilized cavities within a cavitation chamber is provided. The system includes a hydraulically actuated driver coupled to the cavitation chamber. A cavitation piston, coupled to a hydraulic piston, forms the desired cavities during piston retraction and then implodes the cavities during piston extension. An impeller assembly with at least one impeller located within the cavitation chamber is used to stabilize the cavities. Preferably the cavitation fluid is degassed prior to hydraulically driving cavitation within the chamber, the degassing performed either within the cavitation chamber or within a separate degassing chamber or system. In one aspect, a coupling sleeve is interposed between the hydraulic driver and the cavitation chamber, the coupling sleeve housing at least a portion of the cavitation piston drive rod. Preferably the coupling sleeve can be evacuated.



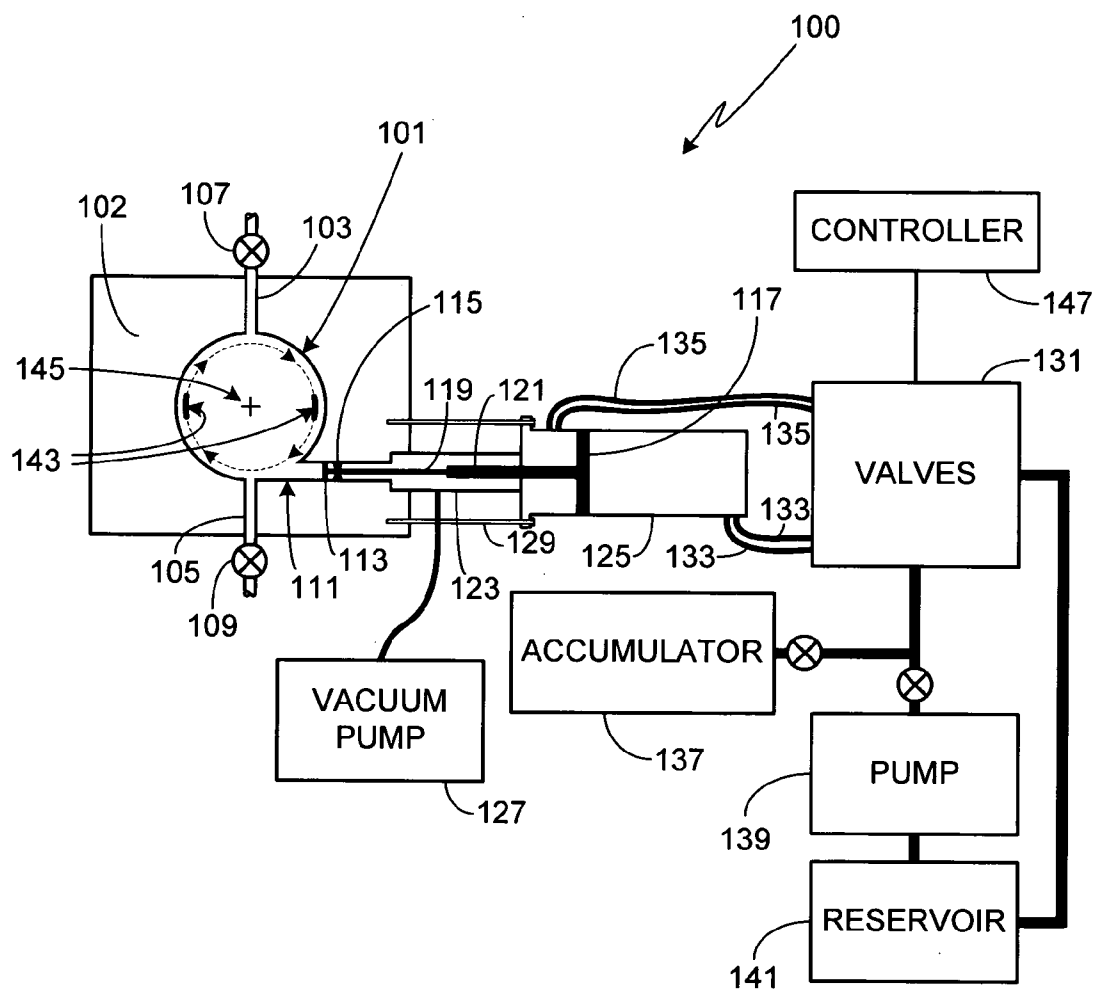
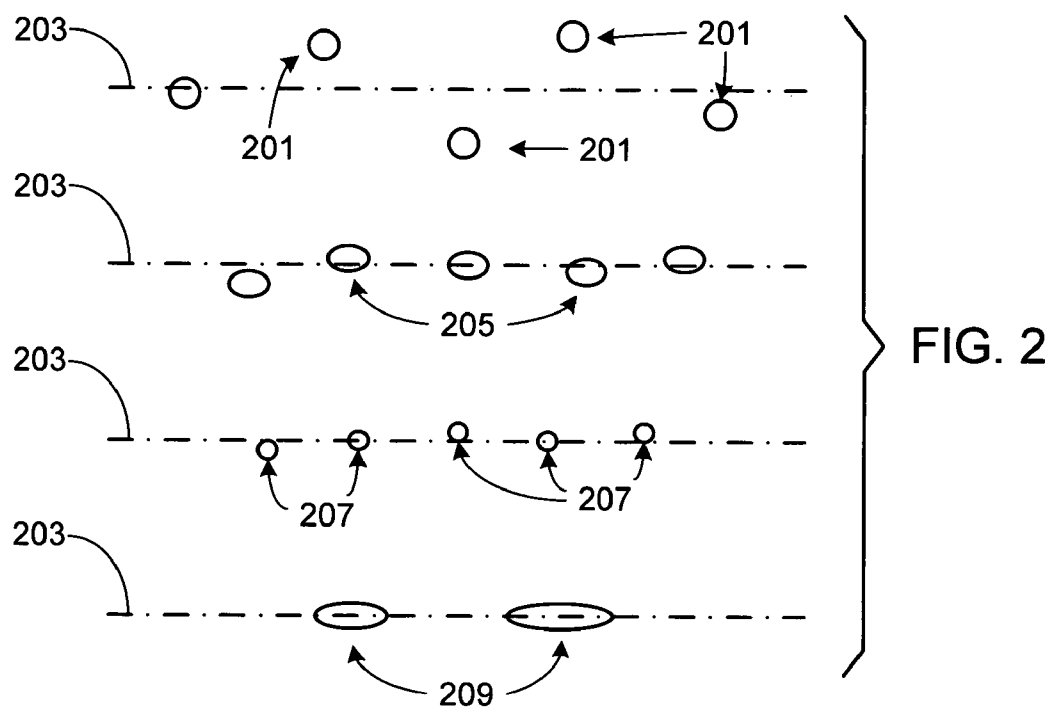


FIG. 1



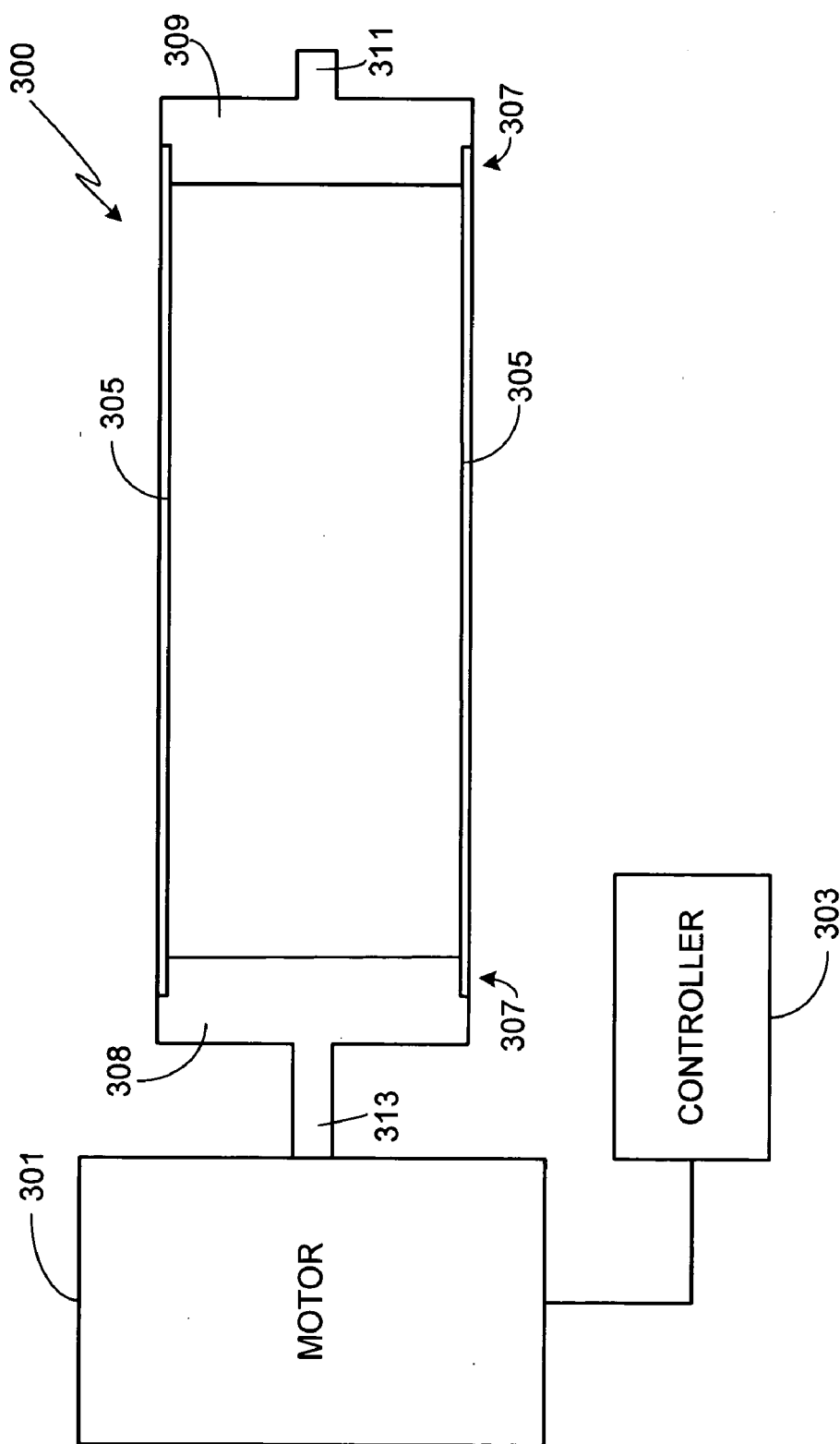


FIG. 3

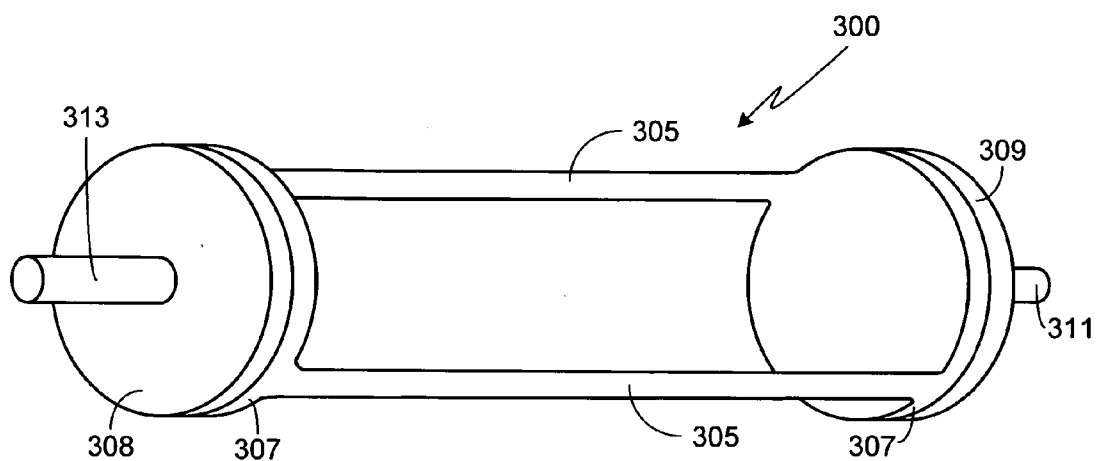


FIG. 4

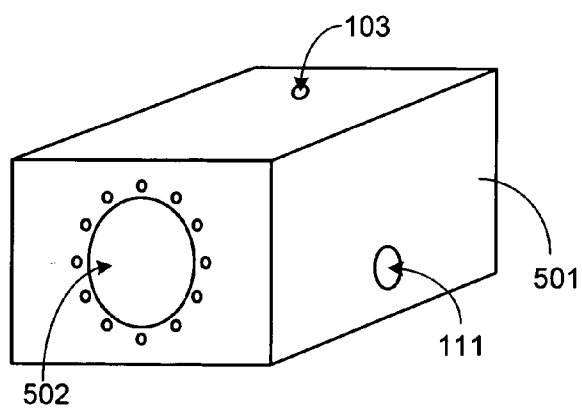


FIG. 5

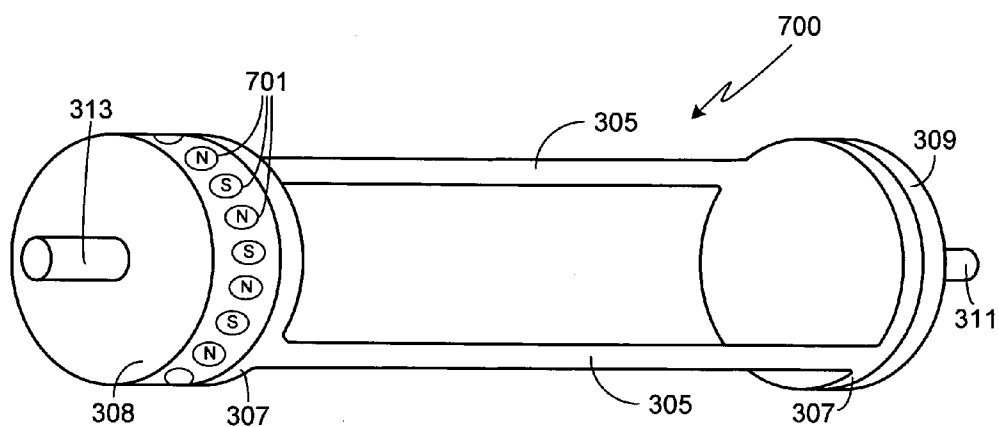


FIG. 7

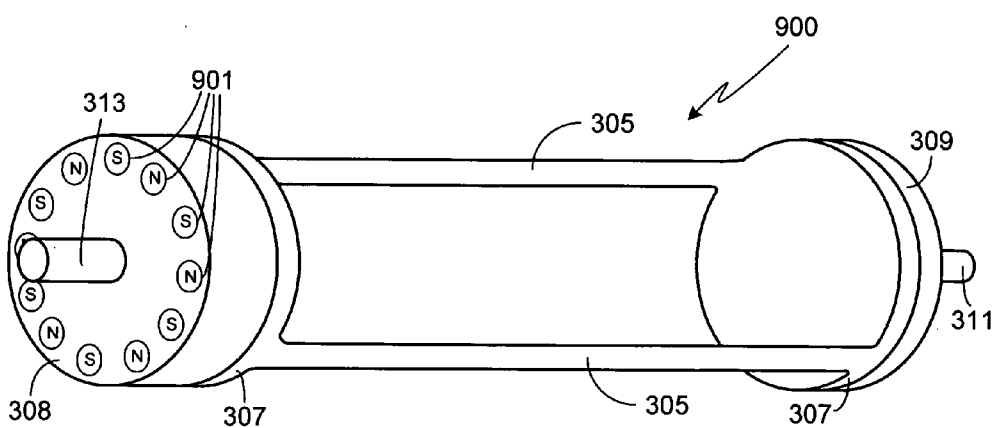


FIG. 9

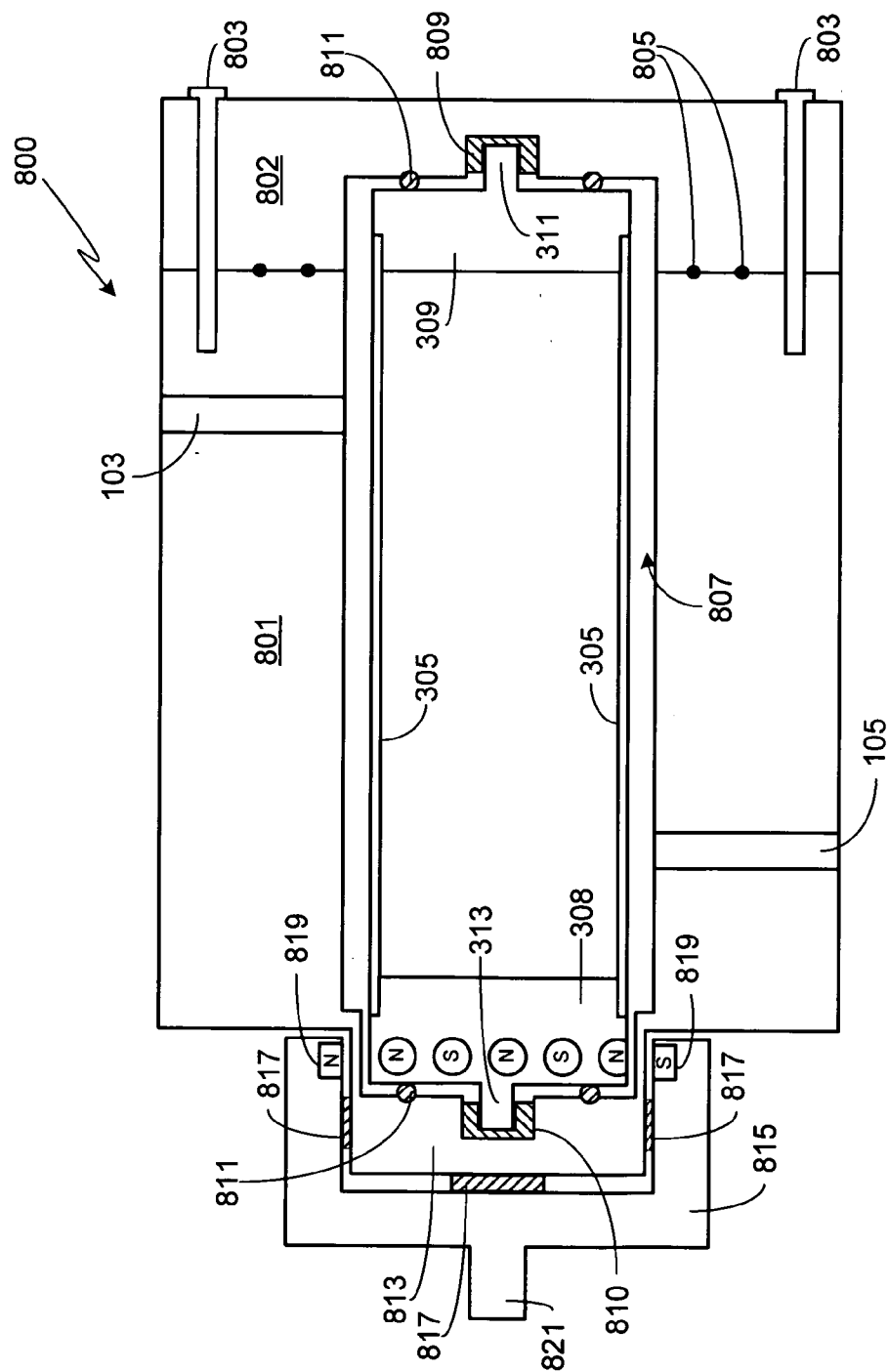


FIG. 8

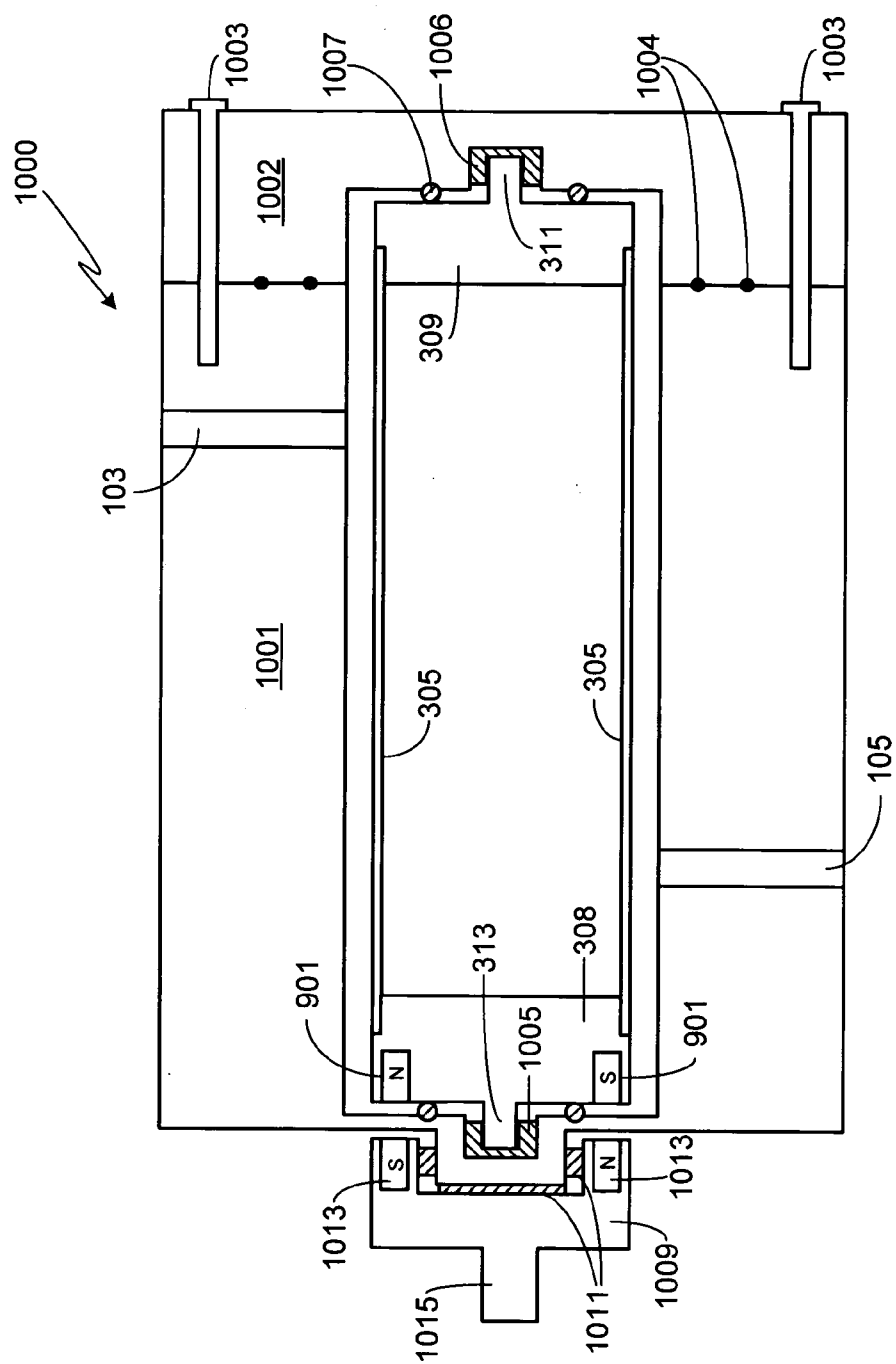


FIG. 10

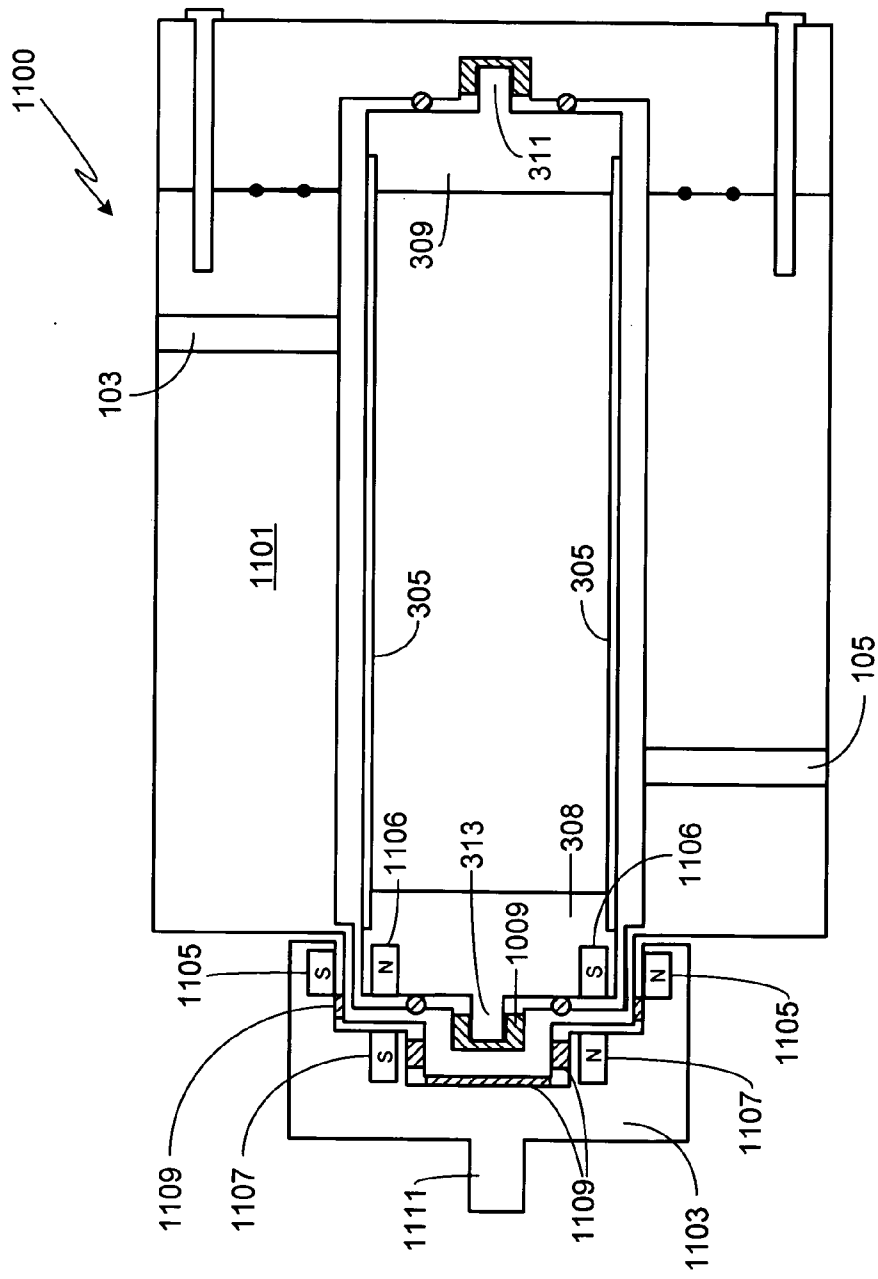


FIG. 11

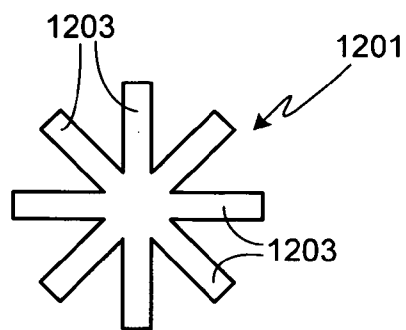


FIG. 12

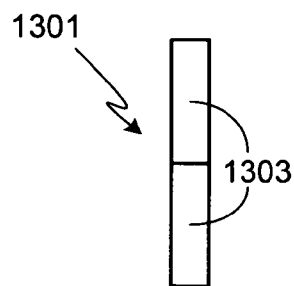


FIG. 13

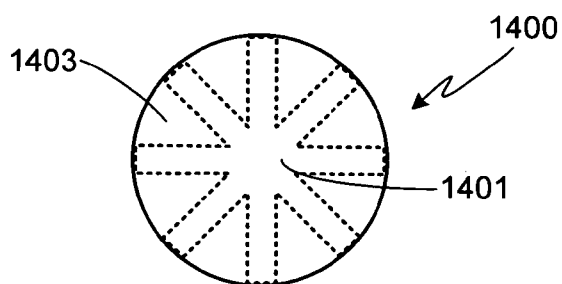


FIG. 14

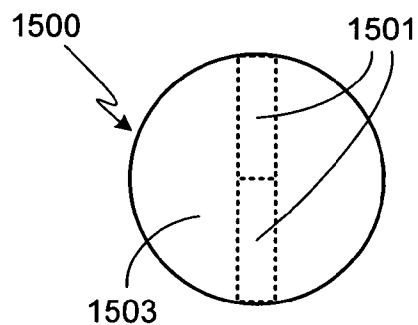


FIG. 15

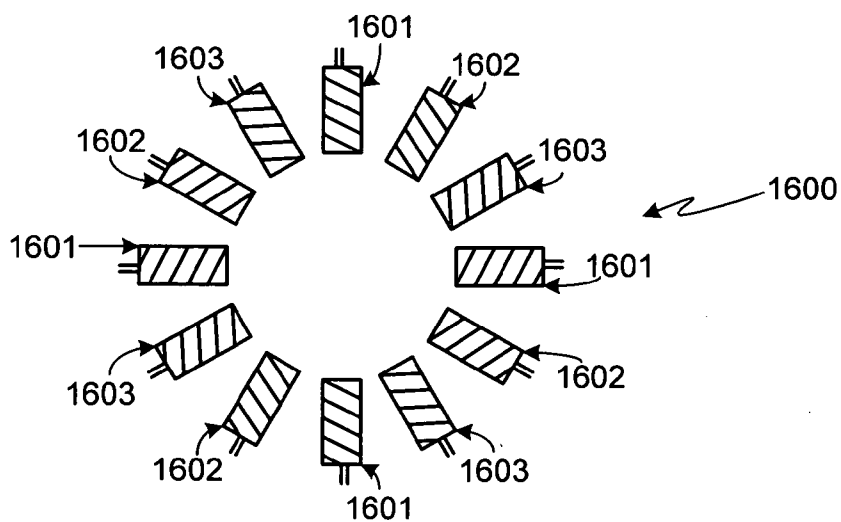


FIG. 16

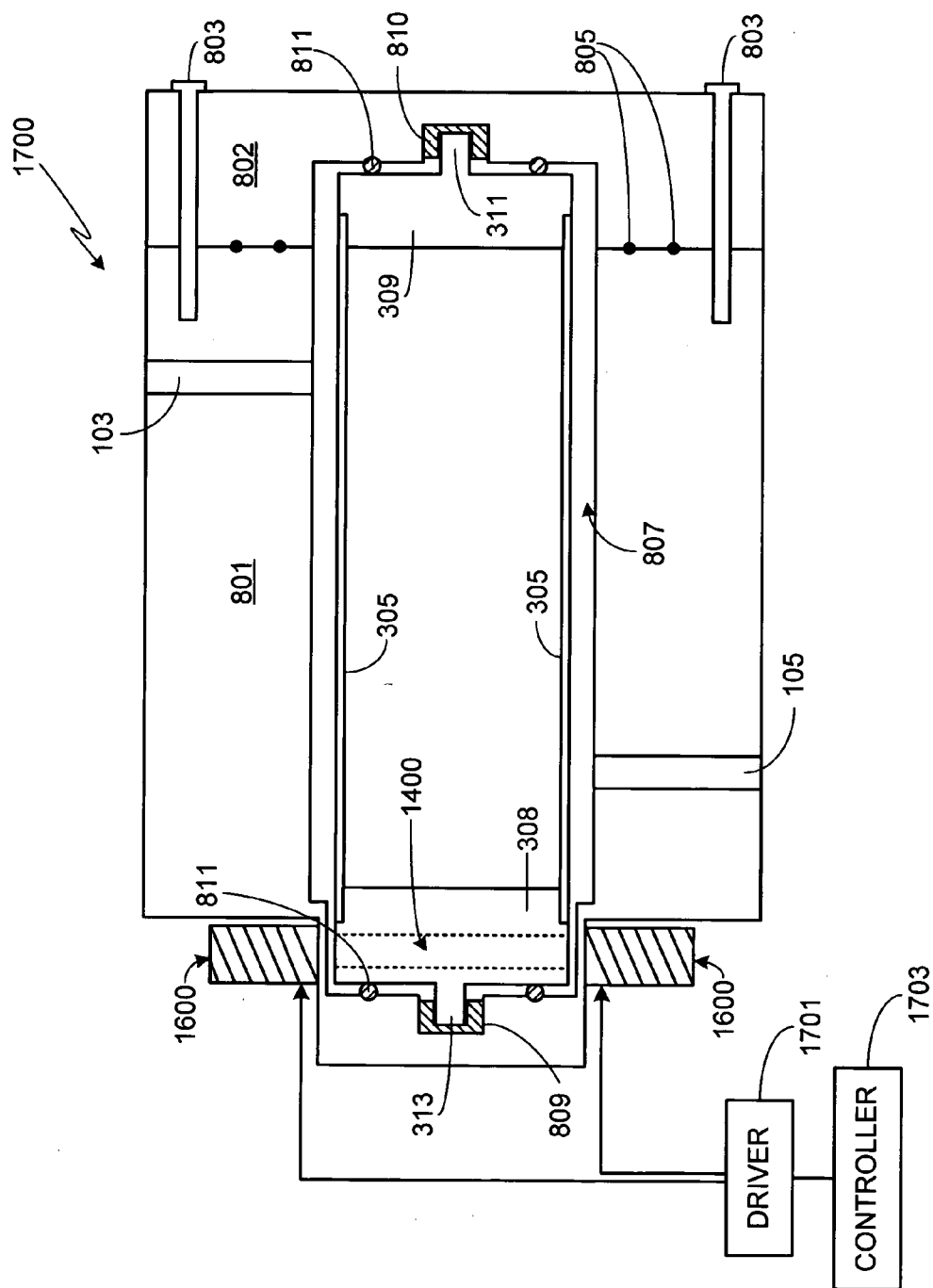


FIG. 17

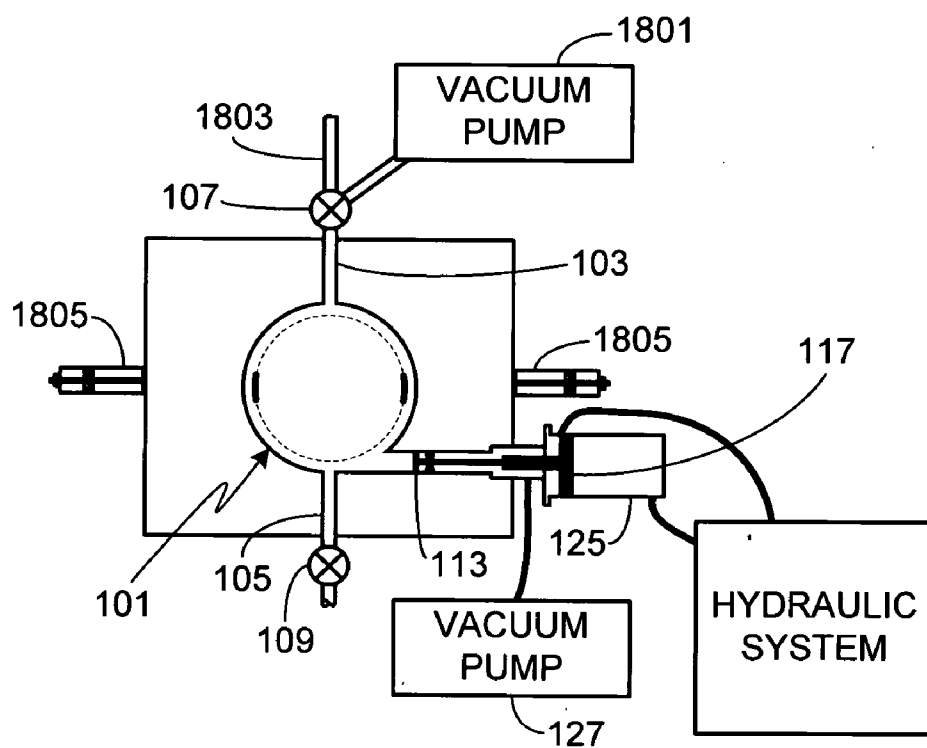


FIG. 18

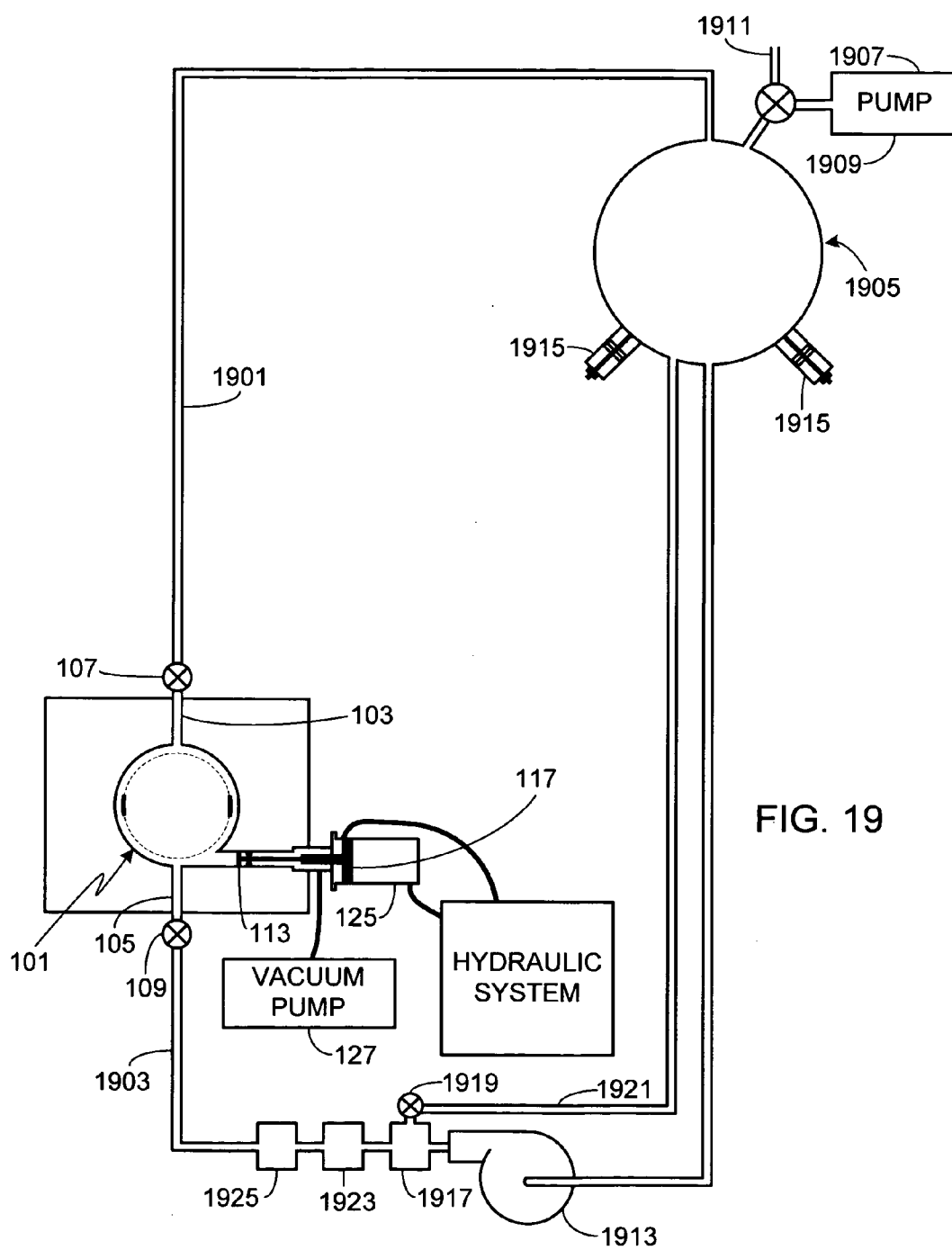


FIG. 19

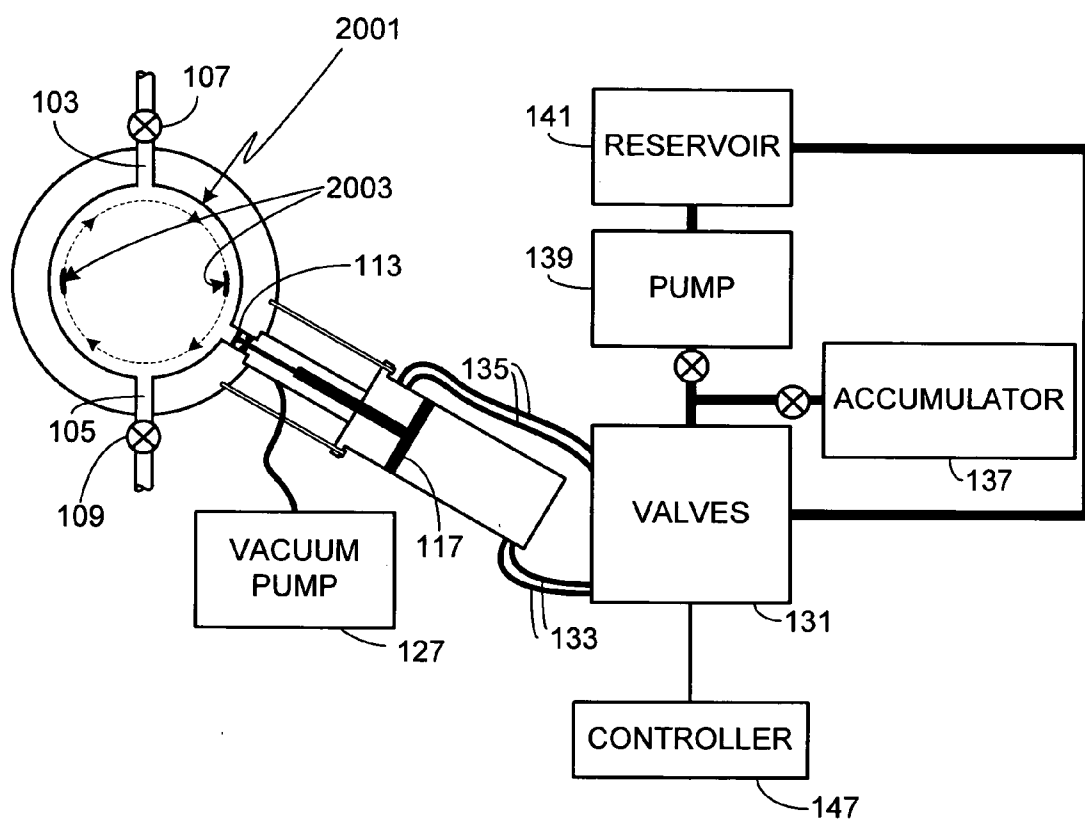
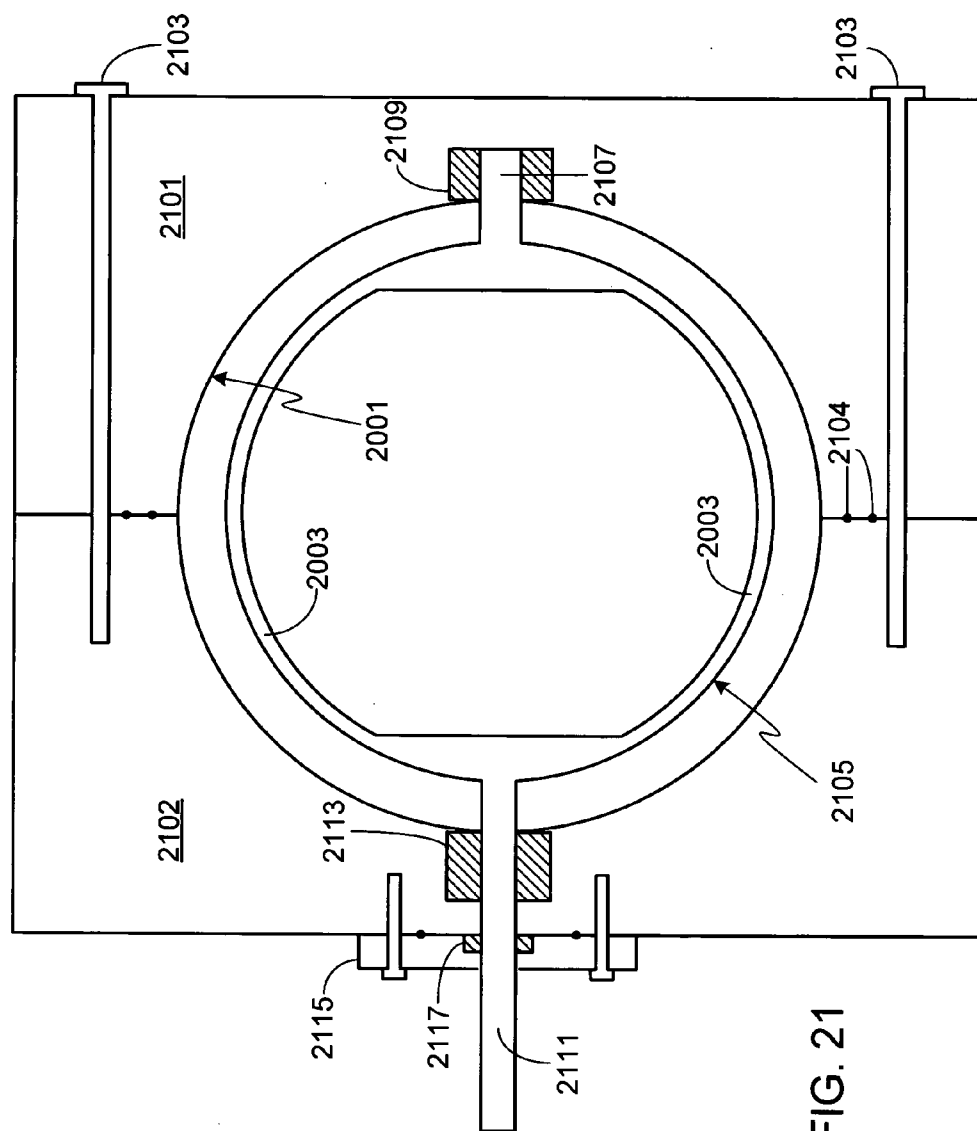


FIG. 20



HYDRAULIC ACTUATED CAVITATION CHAMBER WITH INTEGRATED FLUID ROTATION SYSTEM

CROSS-REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/068,080, filed Feb. 28, 2005 and No. 11/057,347, filed Feb. 14, 2005, which is a continuation-in-part of No. 11/038,344, filed Jan. 18, 2005, the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference for any and all purposes.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates generally to cavitation systems and, more particularly, to a hydraulic system for cavitating stabilized bubbles within a cavitation chamber.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Sonoluminescence is a well-known phenomena discovered in the 1930's in which light is generated when a liquid is cavitates. Although a variety of techniques for cavitating the liquid are known (e.g., spark discharge, laser pulse, flowing the liquid through a Venturi tube), one of the most common techniques is through the application of high intensity sound waves.

[0004] In essence, the cavitation process consists of three stages; bubble formation, growth and subsequent collapse. The bubble or bubbles cavitates during this process absorb the applied energy, for example sound energy, and then release the energy in the form of light emission during an extremely brief period of time. The intensity of the generated light depends on a variety of factors including the physical properties of the liquid (e.g., density, surface tension, vapor pressure, chemical structure, temperature, hydrostatic pressure, etc.) and the applied energy (e.g., sound wave amplitude, sound wave frequency, etc.).

[0005] Although it is generally recognized that during the collapse of a cavitating bubble extremely high temperature plasmas are developed, leading to the observed sonoluminescence effect, many aspects of the phenomena have not yet been characterized. As such, the phenomena is at the heart of a considerable amount of research as scientists attempt to further characterize the phenomena (e.g., effects of pressure on the cavitating medium) as well as its many applications (e.g., sonochemistry, chemical detoxification, ultrasonic cleaning, etc.).

[0006] Acoustic drivers are commonly used to drive the cavitation process. For example, in an article entitled *Ambient Pressure Effect on Single-Bubble Sonoluminescence* by Dan et al. published in vol. 83, no. 9 of Physical Review Letters, the authors use a piezoelectric transducer to drive cavitation at the fundamental frequency of the cavitation chamber. They used this apparatus to study the effects of ambient pressure on bubble dynamics and single bubble sonoluminescence.

[0007] U.S. Pat. No. 4,333,796 discloses a cavitation chamber that is generally cylindrical although the inventors note that other shapes, such as spherical, can also be used. It is further disclosed that the chamber is comprised of a refractory metal such as tungsten, titanium, molybdenum,

rhodium or some alloy thereof and the cavitation medium is a liquid metal such as lithium or an alloy thereof. Surrounding the cavitation chamber is a housing which is purportedly used as a neutron and tritium shield. Projecting through both the outer housing and the cavitation chamber walls are a number of acoustic horns, each of the acoustic horns being coupled to a transducer which supplies the mechanical energy to the associated horn. The patent discloses that the temperatures achieved by a collapsing bubble depend strongly on whether or not the interface of the bubble and the host liquid remain spherical during collapse. Noting that the earth's gravitational field is an asymmetric force that can cause bubble deformation, the patent discloses that a preferred cavitation chamber includes means for applying a magnetic field to cancel the gravitational force, thus creating a zero-gravity field within the cavitation zone. U.S. Pat. No. 4,333,796 further discloses that if the bubble is cylindrical or quasi-cylindrical, small surface perturbations will neither grow nor decay. The patent discloses several means of achieving such a bubble shape, including imposing a time-varying magnetic field.

[0008] U.S. Pat. No. 4,563,341, a continuation-in-part of U.S. Pat. No. 4,333,796, discloses the use of a vertical standing pressure wave excited by a transducer in the bottom wall of the chamber as a means of reducing the effects of the earth's gravitational field within the cavitation zone.

[0009] U.S. Pat. No. 5,658,534 discloses a sonochemical apparatus consisting of a stainless steel tube about which ultrasonic transducers are affixed. The patent provides considerable detail as to the method of coupling the transducers to the tube. In particular, the patent discloses a transducer fixed to a cylindrical half-wavelength coupler by a stud, the coupler being clamped within a stainless steel collar welded to the outside of the sonochemical tube. The collars allow circulation of oil through the collar and an external heat exchanger. The abutting faces of the coupler and the transducer assembly are smooth and flat. The energy produced by the transducer passes through the coupler into the oil and then from the oil into the wall of the sonochemical tube.

[0010] U.S. Pat. No. 5,858,104 discloses a shock wave chamber partially filled with a liquid. The remaining portion of the chamber is filled with gas which can be pressurized by a connected pressure source. Acoustic transducers mounted in the sidewalls of the chamber are used to position an object within the chamber while another transducer delivers a compressional acoustic shock wave into the liquid. A flexible membrane separating the liquid from the gas reflects the compressional shock wave as a dilatation wave focused on the location of the object about which a bubble is formed.

[0011] U.S. Pat. No. 5,994,818 discloses a transducer assembly for use with tubular resonator cavity rather than a cavitation chamber. The assembly includes a piezoelectric transducer coupled to a cylindrical shaped transducer block. The transducer block is coupled via a central threaded bolt to a wave guide which, in turn, is coupled to the tubular resonator cavity. The transducer, transducer block, wave guide and resonator cavity are co-axial along a common central longitudinal axis. The outer surface of the end of the wave guide and the inner surface of the end of the resonator cavity are each threaded, thus allowing the wave guide to be threadably and rigidly coupled to the resonator cavity.

[0012] PCT Application No. US95/15972 discloses a non-periodically forced bubble fusion apparatus. The apparatus

is comprised of a liquid-filled pressure vessel into which deuterium gas bubbles are injected. A non-periodic pressure field is generated within the liquid, the pressure field causing the bubbles to oscillate and become compressed thereby heating the bubbles to a temperature which is sufficiently high to cause a fusion reaction in the hot deuterium plasma formed at implosion stagnation. The application does not disclose any means of stabilizing the movement of the injected bubbles or positioning the bubbles within the pressure vessel.

[0013] PCT Application No. US02/16761 discloses a nuclear fusion reactor in which at least a portion of the liquid within the reactor is placed into a state of tension, this state of tension being less than the cavitation threshold of the liquid. In at least one disclosed embodiment, acoustic waves are used to pretension the liquid. After the desired state of tension is obtained, a cavitation initiation source, such as a neutron source, nucleates at least one bubble within the liquid, the bubble having a radius greater than a critical bubble radius. The nucleated bubbles are then imploded, the temperature generated by the implosion being sufficient to induce a nuclear fusion reaction.

[0014] PCT Application No. CA03/00342 discloses a nuclear fusion reactor in which a bubble of fusible material is compressed using an acoustic pulse, the compression of the bubble providing the necessary energy to induce nuclear fusion. The nuclear fusion reactor is spherically shaped and filled with a liquid such as molten lithium or molten sodium. A pressure control system is used to maintain the liquid at the desired operating pressure. To form the desired acoustic pulse, a pneumatic-mechanical system is used in which a plurality of pistons associated with a plurality of air guns strike the outer surface of the reactor with sufficient force to form a shock wave within the liquid in the reactor. The application discloses releasing the bubble at the bottom of the chamber and applying the acoustic pulse as the bubble passes through the center of the reactor. A number of methods of determining when the bubble is approximately located at the center of the reactor are disclosed.

[0015] In a paper entitled *Sonoluminescence and Bubble Dynamics for a Single, Stable, Cavitation Bubble* (J. Acoust. Soc. Am. 91 (6), June 1992), Felipe Gaitan et al. modeled the motion of acoustically driven bubbles based on the results of their single bubble experiments. The authors' experimental apparatus included a liquid filled levitation cell in which a stationary acoustic wave was excited, the stationary wave counteracting the hydrostatic or buoyancy force, thus stabilizing a bubble injected into the cell and allowing it to remain suspended in the liquid indefinitely.

[0016] Avik Chakravarty et al., in a paper entitled *Stable Sonoluminescence Within a Water Hammer Tube* (Phys Rev E 69 (066317), Jun. 24, 2004), investigated the sonoluminescence effect using a water hammer tube rather than an acoustic resonator, thus allowing bubbles of greater size to be studied. The experimental apparatus employed by the authors included a sealed water hammer tube partially filled with the liquid under investigation. The water hammer tube was mounted vertically to the shaft of a moving coil vibrator. Cavitation was monitored both with a microphone and a photomultiplier tube. To stabilize the bubbles within the water hammer tube and minimize the effects of the tube walls, in one embodiment the tube was rotated about its axis.

[0017] Although a variety of cavitation systems have been designed, typically these systems operate at relatively low pressure, utilize acoustic drivers to cavitate extremely small bubbles, and suffer from a variety of shortcomings due to the inherent instability of the cavitating bubbles. The present invention overcomes these limitations by providing a system that operates at high pressures and that can be used to form and cavitate very large, stabilized bubbles.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0018] The present invention provides a cavitation system for forming and imploding stabilized cavities within a cavitation chamber. The system includes a hydraulically actuated driver coupled to the cavitation chamber. A cavitation piston, coupled to a hydraulic piston, forms the desired cavities during piston retraction and then implodes the cavities during piston extension. An impeller assembly with at least one impeller located within the cavitation chamber is used to stabilize the cavities. An externally mounted motor, coupled to the impeller assembly drive shaft, rotates the impeller thereby causing bubbles within the cavitation chamber to move toward the impeller's axis of rotation. Preferably the axis of rotation of the impeller is positioned in a substantially horizontal plane, thus allowing the rotating impeller to counteract the tendency of the bubbles to drift upward and to accumulate on the upper, inner surfaces of the cavitation chamber.

[0019] In addition to a hydraulic pump and hydraulic fluid reservoir, one embodiment of the invention includes an accumulator, thereby providing a means for rapidly cycling the hydraulic driver and increasing the implosion intensity.

[0020] In at least one embodiment of the invention, a coupling sleeve is interposed between the hydraulic driver and the cavitation chamber. The rod which links the cavitation piston to the hydraulic piston is housed, at least in part, within the coupling sleeve. The coupling sleeve helps to prevent cross-contamination of the cavitation fluid and the hydraulic fluid. Additionally, by evacuating the coupling sleeve, a potential source for cavitation chamber gas leaks is minimized, if not altogether eliminated.

[0021] Preferably the cavitation fluid is degassed prior to hydraulically driving cavitation within the chamber. Degassing can be performed within the cavitation chamber or within a separate degassing chamber, the degassing chamber preferably coupled to the cavitation chamber via a circulatory system. In at least one embodiment, the cavitation fluid degassing system uses both a vacuum pump and one or more acoustic drivers coupled to the degassing chamber.

[0022] In at least one embodiment of the invention, a cavitation fluid circulatory system is coupled to the cavitation chamber, preferably via a pair of inlets. In-line valves on the chamber inlets allow the chamber to be isolated, when desired, from the circulatory system.

[0023] The cavitation chamber can be shaped, for example spherically or cylindrically shaped. If desired, the impeller blades can be similarly shaped.

[0024] A further understanding of the nature and advantages of the present invention may be realized by reference to the remaining portions of the specification and the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0025] **FIG. 1** is a cross-sectional view on an exemplary embodiment;

[0026] **FIG. 2** illustrates the effects of cavitation fluid rotation on a plurality of bubbles contained within a cavitation chamber;

[0027] **FIG. 3** is an illustration of a two-bladed impeller assembly suitable for use with a cylindrical cavity;

[0028] **FIG. 4** is a perspective view of the impeller shown in **FIG. 3**;

[0029] **FIG. 5** is a perspective view of the external body portion of a cylindrical cavitation chamber for use with the impeller shown in **FIGS. 3 and 4**;

[0030] **FIG. 6** is a cross-sectional view of the impeller assembly shown in **FIGS. 3 and 4** and the chamber shown in **FIG. 5**;

[0031] **FIG. 7** is a perspective view of a magnetically coupleable impeller;

[0032] **FIG. 8** is a cross-sectional view of a cavitation chamber utilizing the impeller shown in **FIG. 7**;

[0033] **FIG. 9** is a perspective view of an alternate embodiment of a magnetically coupleable impeller;

[0034] **FIG. 10** is a cross-sectional view of a cavitation chamber utilizing the impeller shown in **FIG. 9**;

[0035] **FIG. 11** is a cross-sectional view of an alternate cylindrical cavitation chamber utilizing a dual magnetic coupling system;

[0036] **FIG. 12** is an end view of a ferromagnetic impeller rotor;

[0037] **FIG. 13** is an end view of a permanent magnet impeller rotor;

[0038] **FIG. 14** is an end view of the impeller rotor of **FIG. 12** embedded within a second material in order to eliminate rotor edges;

[0039] **FIG. 15** is an end view of the impeller rotor of **FIG. 13** embedded within a second material in order to eliminate rotor edges;

[0040] **FIG. 16** is an end view of a stator;

[0041] **FIG. 17** is a cross-sectional view of another embodiment of the invention utilizing an electromagnetic coupling/drive system;

[0042] **FIG. 18** is a cross-sectional view of an embodiment in which degassing is performed within the cavitation chamber;

[0043] **FIG. 19** is a cross-sectional view of an embodiment in which degassing is performed within a separate degassing chamber;

[0044] **FIG. 20** is a cross-sectional view of a spherical cavitation chamber for use with the invention;

[0045] **FIG. 21** is a cross-sectional view of a mechanically coupleable impeller assembly and the spherical cavitation chamber of **FIG. 20**; and

[0046] **FIG. 22** is a cross-sectional view of a magnetically coupleable impeller assembly and the spherical cavitation chamber of **FIG. 20**.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC EMBODIMENTS

System Overview

[0047] **FIG. 1** is a cross-sectional view of the principal elements of the invention implemented in an exemplary embodiment. The primary component of system **100** is the cavitation chamber **101**. Although in the illustrated embodiment cavitation chamber **101** is cylindrically-shaped, it will be appreciated that the invention is not so limited and that cavitation chambers of other configurations (e.g., spherical, conical, cubical, rectangular, etc.) can also be used with the present invention. Chamber **101** must be fabricated to withstand high operating pressures, preferably pressures of at least 1,000 PSI, more preferably pressures of at least 10,000 PSI, and still more preferably pressures of at least 100,000 PSI. Additionally, chamber **101** should be designed to properly seal when evacuated, thus allowing degassing procedures to be performed in situ. Typically chamber **101** is fabricated from multiple pieces which are subsequently held together using brazing, a plurality of bolts, or other means. It will be appreciated that if chamber **101** is fabricated from multiple pieces, suitable sealing means (e.g., o-rings, gaskets, etc.) must be used to seal the individual pieces together, thus allowing the chamber to operate at the desired pressures. In the illustrated embodiment, chamber **101** is fabricated from a single block of material **102**, for example stainless steel, into which a cylindrical hole has been bored.

[0048] Chamber **101** can be fabricated from any of a variety of materials although there are some constraints placed on the chamber material. First, the material is preferably machinable, thus simplifying the fabrication process. Second, the material should be conducive to high pressure operation. Third, if the chamber is to be operated at a high temperature, the chamber material should have a relatively high melting temperature. Additionally, depending upon the process used to assemble individual chamber pieces together (e.g., brazing), a high melting temperature may be desirable as an aid to fabrication and assembly. Fourth, the chamber material should be corrosion resistant, thus allowing the chamber to be used repeatedly and with a variety of liquids. Fifth, the material should be hard enough to allow a good surface finish to be obtained. In one preferred embodiment of the invention, the chamber is fabricated from 17-4 precipitation hardened stainless steel.

[0049] With respect to the dimensions of the chamber, both inner and outer dimensions, the selected sizes depend upon the intended use of the chamber. For example, smaller chambers are typically preferable for situations in which it is desirable to limit the amount of cavitating medium, for example due to the cost of the medium, or when extremely high peak pressures are desired. On the other hand large chambers, with inside dimensions on the order of 8-10 inches or greater, simplify experimental set-up and event observation, and allow for implosion of larger cavities. Thick chamber walls are preferable, both due to the high operating pressures encountered during chamber operation and as a means of simplifying the coupling of the hydraulic driver to the chamber as described in detail below. In the

illustrated embodiment, cylindrical cavitation chamber **101** is 6 inches long with an inside diameter (ID) of 3 inches.

[0050] As described more fully below, the cavitation medium is degassed prior to the use of the hydraulic driver of the invention. Degassing the cavitation fluid is crucial in order for the collapsing bubbles within the cavitation chamber to achieve the desired high velocities, and thus high temperatures and pressures, at implosion stagnation. The cavitation fluid can be degassed within chamber **101**, degassed in a separate degassing chamber, or degassed in stages such that one stage of degassing is performed prior to chamber filling and a second stage of degassing is performed within the chamber. Regardless of where the cavitation fluid is degassed, chamber **101** preferably includes a pair of inlets **103** and **105** thus allowing the chamber to be filled, drained, etc. Preferably inlets **103** and **105** are located at the top and bottom portions, respectively, of chamber **101**, and more preferably located at the uppermost and lowermost portions of chamber **101** as shown, thereby helping to prevent gas bubbles from being trapped within chamber **101**. Inlets **103/105** include valves **107/109**, respectively.

[0051] As shown in **FIG. 1**, a hole **111** is bored into the side of chamber **101** such that it intersects a lower portion of the cavitation chamber. Although this configuration is preferred, it should be understood that the hydraulic driver does not have to be coupled at a specific angle or at a specific location relative to the cavitation chamber in order to drive cavitation within the chamber.

[0052] Within hole **111** is cavitation drive piston **113**, piston **113** having an outside diameter (OD) of 0.690 inches in this embodiment. One or more seals **115** prevent leakage of the cavitation medium around piston **113** during the piston stroke. In the preferred embodiment, cavitation drive piston **113** is coupled to a hydraulically actuated piston **117** via a two-part piston rod, i.e., rod portions **119** and **121**. Preferably rod portions **119** and **121** are threadably coupled together. The two-part piston rod design simplifies assembly/disassembly as well as system maintenance. Furthermore, in terms of research and development devices, this design allows a single hydraulic piston to be easily coupled to any of a variety of cavitation chambers and cavitation pistons, thus providing system flexibility at minimal cost. Lastly, this arrangement provides a simple method of altering the pressure applied by piston **113** to the cavitation medium. Specifically, since the peak applied pressure is directly proportional to the effective area of the piston, pressure changes can be made by altering the ratio of the areas of hydraulic piston **117** and cavitation drive piston **113**.

[0053] Due to the need to accommodate piston **113** from full extension to full retraction, i.e., the piston stroke, either the wall thickness of chamber housing **102** must be appropriately sized or an additional sleeve (i.e., a spacer) must be added to accommodate the piston stroke. In the illustrated embodiment, with a piston stroke of 3 inches, a coupling sleeve **123** is introduced between housing **102** and hydraulic cylinder **125**. In addition to being more economical than sizing chamber housing **102** to accommodate the entire piston stroke, coupling sleeve **123** provides further separation between the hydraulic liquid driving the hydraulic piston (i.e., piston **117**) and the cavitation fluid within chamber **101**, thus helping to prevent contamination of either fluid by the other fluid due to a faulty seal. Preferably

coupling sleeve **123** is coupled to a vacuum pump **127**, thus allowing the sleeve to be evacuated. The inventor has found that by evacuating sleeve **123** air leakage into chamber **101** is reduced, air leakage leading to a cushioning of the desired cavitation implosions.

[0054] Although not required, in the preferred embodiment coupling sleeve **123** is counter-bored into housing **102** and subsequently welded in place. Alternate methods of coupling sleeve **123** to housing **102** include bolts, a threaded hole/collar arrangement, brazing, bonding, etc. In the preferred embodiment, hydraulic cylinder **125** is held in place via a plurality of bolts **129**. Alternately, cylinder **125** can be brazed, bonded, or threadably coupled to sleeve **123**. Suitable hydraulic cylinders are manufactured by Ortman, for example Ortman 3T-NQ with a 2.5 inch bore, 3 inch stroke and a 1 inch piston rod.

[0055] Hydraulic cylinder **125** is coupled to a valve **131** by hydraulic lines **133/135**. Although valve **131** can be manually operated, preferably it is a solenoid operated valve(s) (e.g., Continental high flow solenoid operated valves). Valve **131** applies forward pressure to piston **117** through hydraulic lines **133**, thus causing piston **117** and coupled piston **113** to become extended. Retraction of piston **117** and coupled piston **113** is caused by valve **131** applying backward pressure via hydraulic lines **135**. Although a single hydraulic line **133** and a single hydraulic line **135** can be used to extend and retract piston **117**, utilizing multiple lines **133/135** allow for more rapid extension/retraction of the pistons. Rapid extension of the pistons is further aided by the use of a nitrogen loaded, bladder type accumulator **137**. Valve **131** is also coupled to a hydraulic pump **139** (e.g., Bosch vane type pump) and a reservoir **141**. The cycling of valve **131**, and thus hydraulic piston **117** and coupled cavitation piston **113**, is controlled by controller **147**.

[0056] Within chamber **101** is an impeller which, in the illustrated embodiment, is comprised of a pair of impeller blades **143**. The impeller is either directly or indirectly (e.g., magnetically) coupled to a motor, not shown, that rotates the impeller about an axis **145**. Indirect coupling offers the advantage of allowing the entire impeller assembly to be contained within chamber **101**, thus making it easier to seal the chamber as the need for drive shaft seals is eliminated.

[0057] The impeller of the invention serves many purposes. First, the impeller helps to keep cavitating bubbles, regardless of their size, away from the inner chamber surfaces, thus insuring that the imploding bubbles are completely surrounded by liquid. As a result, the implosion symmetry and peak stagnation temperature and pressure of the imploding bubbles are improved. Second, the impeller centers the bubble or bubbles along the impeller's axis. Therefore if the impeller axis is maintained in a horizontal plane, as preferred, the impeller's rotation can be used to overcome the bubble's tendency to drift upward through the chamber. This benefit is especially important with larger bubbles such as those preferably created using the hydraulic driver of the present invention. Third, the impeller can be used to improve the sphericity of the bubbles during the cavitation process, in particular during the period of cavitation in which the bubbles are collapsing. As a result, smaller bubble diameters can be achieved prior to bubble deformation or disintegration.

[0058] Once bubbles are formed using the hydraulic piston, as described more fully below, the impeller enclosed

with the cavitation chamber can have a variety of effects on the bubbles depending upon the rotational velocity of the impeller, the length of time the impeller has been rotating, cavitation fluid pressure, cavitation fluid composition, density and surface tension. For example, immediately after the impeller starts to rotate and assuming a relatively low impeller rotation velocity, bubbles **201** are drawn toward the rotational axis **203**. During this stage of rotation and with low rotation velocities, the bubbles remain quasi-spherical in shape as the force exerted by the rotating fluid is insufficient to overcome the bubbles' tendency to assume a spherical shape, thereby minimizing the bubble's surface tension. As the rotational velocity increases, the bubbles **205** are drawn more forcefully towards the rotational axis **203**. Simultaneously, bubbles **205** begin to elongate as illustrated. At this stage typically there is a 'string' of bubbles formed along the rotational axis, the sphericity of each of the bubbles depending strongly on the rotational velocity of the fluid as well as the size of the individual bubbles. For example bubbles **205**, as shown, have begun to elongate while smaller bubbles **207**, at the same fluid rotation velocity, remain quasi-spherical in shape. If the bubbles are sufficiently large, or the rotational velocity sufficiently high, often multiple bubbles will coalesce into larger, elongated bubbles **209**, the number and size of bubbles **209** depending upon the number of bubbles, their sizes, and the rotational velocity. Whether the bubbles are vapor filled (evacuated) or gas filled (for example, with gases to be reacted), their behavior is substantially the same.

[0059] The impeller can either be rotated continuously or non-continuously. Due to the force exerted by cavitation piston **113** and the initial localization of that force within hole **111**, preferably neither impeller blade **143** is located at the intersection of hole **111** and chamber **101** during the retraction of piston **113** or during the extension of piston **113**, thus minimizing interference between the impeller and the cavitation piston. Such interference minimization can be achieved, for example, by maximizing the distance between all impeller blades **143** and hole **111**/cavitation piston **113**. By preventing an impeller blade from being located near the intersection of hole **111** and chamber **101** during piston cycling, potential damage to the impeller blades (e.g., blade bending) can be prevented. In order to accomplish this goal, preferably the impeller controller (e.g., controller **303** shown in FIG. 3) and the piston controller (i.e., controller **147**) time the rotation of the impeller and the cycling of piston **113** to insure that the impeller blades are not located near the intersection of hole **111** and chamber **101** during piston cycling. Alternately, the impeller blades can be rotated prior to piston cycling and then stopped at a location other than the intersection of hole **111** and chamber **101** prior to piston cycling. As the cavitation fluid will continue to rotate for a short period of time after impeller rotation cessation, some of the beneficial effects of the impeller are still realized. If desired, impeller rotation can be re-initiated after piston cycling or after the first cycle half (i.e., piston retraction). Alternately, piston **113** can be retracted, thereby creating one or more bubbles, prior to rotation of the impeller. The impeller can then be rotated in order to center and/or stabilize the bubble(s). Then after bubble stabilization, the impeller blades can be stopped, preferably at a location other than the intersection of hole **111** and chamber **101**, and the piston extended, thereby causing the implosion of the cavity. Alternately, the impeller assembly can be designed to insure

that the blades and assembly can withstand operation of the cavitation piston, thus allowing continuous rotation of the impeller during piston cycling. Design considerations to insure such operation include material selection (e.g., titanium), blade thickness, and impeller assembly dimensions (e.g., distance between blades **143** and the inner wall of chamber **101**).

[0060] As previously noted, a variety of different bubble geometries can be achieved by varying the impeller rotation velocity, selecting either continuous or non-continuous impeller rotation, and controlling the bubble density and bubble volume. Additionally it will be appreciated that other parameters such as impeller design and cavitation fluid composition affect the bubble geometry. With respect to composition, the two primary attributes of the selected cavitation medium which control the response of a bubble to the rotating impeller is the medium's viscosity and surface tension. Increasing the viscosity of the cavitation medium affects the ease by which the impeller can rotate within the fluid as well as the rate at which bubbles can move within the fluid, both during impeller rotation and after cessation of impeller rotation. The surface tension affects the extent of bubble elongation in response to impeller rotation.

[0061] Impeller Design

[0062] The invention is not limited to a specific design for the impeller assembly, chamber, or hydraulic driver. For example, the impeller can be either mechanically coupled or magnetically coupled to the impeller motor. FIG. 3 is an illustration of a two-bladed impeller assembly **300** suitable for use with a cylindrical cavity, such as that shown in FIG. 1.

[0063] Impeller assembly **300** is mechanically coupled to a drive motor **301** which is attached to controller **303**. As previously noted and as shown in FIG. 3 and the impeller perspective view of FIG. 4, impeller assembly **300** has a pair of impeller blades **305**. Note that in FIG. 4, impeller assembly **300** has been rotated to provide a clearer view of impeller blades **305**. For applications in which stable on-axis bubbles are desired, preferably the outside diameter of impeller assembly **300** is smaller than the inside diameter of the cavitation chamber by a sufficient amount to minimize wall turbulence that can be caused by rotating the impeller blades in near proximity to the cavity wall. For applications in which bubble clouds are desired, preferably impeller assembly **300** utilizes thick impeller blades and the outside diameter of the impeller is only slightly smaller than the inside of the cavitation chamber, thereby maximizing wall turbulence.

[0064] For ease of fabrication, impeller assembly **300** is fabricated from a cylinder. In one exemplary embodiment the cylinder is 6 inches long with an outside diameter of 2.5 inches and a wall thickness of 0.0625 inches. Preferably impeller assembly **300** is fabricated from a metal such as stainless steel. During impeller fabrication, most of the wall of the cylinder is machined away, leaving only blades **305** and a portion **307** of the cylinder at either end. Cylinder end caps **308** and **309** are attached to end portions **307** using any of a variety of means, including but not limited to press-fitting, bonding, brazing or bolting the pieces together. As shown in further detail below, end cap **309** includes a spindle **311** which confines the axis of rotation of the impeller along the centerline of the chamber. End cap **308** includes a drive

shaft 313, the drive shaft providing a means for coupling impeller assembly 300 to motor 301. Although the invention does not require that impeller 300 use two blades 305 as shown, the inventor has found that two blades provide sufficient fluid rotation capabilities while also providing a strong mechanical design. Other impeller configurations, however, are clearly envisioned (e.g., three blades, four blades, etc.). The primary requirements placed on the number and locations of the impeller blades are (i) balanced and stable operation during rotation and (ii) minimization of impeller created turbulence (assuming bubble clouds are not desired).

[0065] FIG. 5 is a perspective view of the external body portion of a cylindrical cavitation chamber, such as the one shown in FIG. 1, for use with impeller assembly 300. To simplify fabrication, the chamber is fabricated from a single piece of material 501, preferably stainless steel. A cylindrical hole 502 is bored into block 501 such that impeller assembly 300 fits within the hole as shown in the chamber/impeller cross-sectional view of FIG. 6. For the sake of illustration simplicity, FIG. 6 does not include those aspects of the invention corresponding to the cavitation piston and associated hardware. Assuming an impeller with an outside diameter of 2.5 inches, preferably the inside diameter of cavitation cavity 600 is 3.0 inches. Although hole 502 need not be bored completely through block 501 as shown, the inventor has found that chamber assembly and maintenance is simplified by doing so. Accordingly the preferred embodiment of the invention uses a pair of end caps 601/603 to seal chamber 600, the end caps preferably bolted to block 501 with a plurality of bolts 605 and sealed with one or more sealing members 607 (e.g., o-rings). End cap 601 includes one or more bearings 609 to insure proper rotation of impeller spindle 311, and thus impeller 300. End cap 603 preferably includes at least one bearing 611 and multiple seals 613. A secondary end cap 615 with sealing members 617 (e.g., o-rings) may be used, as shown, to hold seals 613 and bearings 611 in place and to provide additional sealing of the chamber. Preferably multiple Teflon o-rings 619 are inset into both end caps 601/603 as shown, o-rings 619 helping to seal chamber 600 as well as providing a low friction surface between the impeller end caps and the chamber end caps.

[0066] The sealing members (i.e., seals 607, 613 and 617) are designed to insure that cavitation chamber 600 can be either evacuated, preferably to a pressure of less than the vapor pressure of the cavitation fluid, or pressurized, preferably to a pressure of at least 1,000 PSI, more preferably to a pressure of at least 10,000 PSI, and still more preferably to a pressure of at least 100,000 PSI. Thus the sealing members are designed to allow the chamber to be either evacuated for degassing or pressurized during operation. It will be appreciated that the invention is not limited to a particular seal arrangement and that there are numerous means for adequately sealing chamber 600. The exact nature of a particular seal depends on whether the surfaces to be sealed are static, such as end cap 603 and chamber body 501, or dynamic, such as drive shaft 313 and end cap 603. Depending upon the intended cavitation medium as well as the desired pressure ranges, a variety of sealing member types can be used with the invention including, but not limited to, o-rings, static packing seals such as gaskets and dynamic packing seals such as flanges, rings, and adjustable soft packings.

[0067] As noted with respect to FIG. 1, preferably chamber 600 includes a pair of chamber inlets 103/105, thus allowing the chamber to be filled, drained and/or coupled to a cavitation fluid circulatory system as described further below as well as in co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/001,720, filed Dec. 1, 2004, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein for any and all purposes.

[0068] Although the impeller assembly can be mechanically driven as described in detail relative to FIGS. 3-6, the impeller can also be magnetically coupled/driven as described more fully below.

[0069] FIGS. 7-8 illustrate an embodiment of an impeller assembly suitable for use with cylindrical chamber 101 of FIG. 1. As in the above figures depicting a mechanically coupled impeller assembly, FIGS. 7-8 do not include those aspects of the invention directed to the cavitation piston/driver assembly. Furthermore, the operation and design of impeller assembly 700 is similar to impeller assembly 300 except for the inclusion of at least one permanent magnet 701, and preferably a plurality of permanent magnets 701 of alternating magnetic polarity, in cylinder end cap 308. Additionally, spindle 313 is shorter in this embodiment of the impeller assembly as it does not need to be long enough to be mechanically coupled to an external motor.

[0070] FIG. 8 is a cross-sectional view of impeller 700 within chamber 800. In the illustrated embodiment, chamber 800 is comprised of two sections, 801 and 802, bolted together with a plurality of bolts 803. One or more sealing members 805 (e.g., o-rings) provide the desired seal between sections 801 and 802. Sealing members 805 are designed to insure that cavitation chamber 800 can be either evacuated, preferably to a pressure of less than the vapor pressure of the cavitation fluid, or pressurized, preferably to a pressure of at least 1,000 PSI, more preferably to a pressure of at least 10,000 PSI, and still more preferably to a pressure of at least 100,000 PSI. Thus the sealing members are designed to allow the chamber to be either evacuated for degassing or pressurized during operation. It will be appreciated that the invention is not limited to a particular seal arrangement and that there are numerous means for adequately sealing chamber 800.

[0071] A cylindrical hole 807 is bored into sections 801 and 802 such that impeller 700 fits within the hole as shown in the chamber cross-sectional view of FIG. 8. Spindles 311 and 313, and thus impeller 700, are centered within hole 807 using bearings 809 and 810, respectively. In addition to centering impeller 700, bearings 809 and 810 insure the free rotation of the impeller. In one embodiment, bearings 809 and 810 are fabricated from a material with a low coefficient of friction, such as Teflon. To insure that end caps 308 and 309 of impeller 700 do not rub against sections 801 and 802 of chamber 800, preferably one or more spacers 811 are interposed between the end caps and the chamber internal surfaces as shown. In one embodiment, spacers 811 are comprised of Teflon o-rings. It will be appreciated that although bearings 809/810 and spacers 811 are preferably comprised of Teflon, alternate materials may be required depending upon the composition, temperature and corrosive characteristics of the cavitation medium.

[0072] In the illustrated embodiment, the outer surface of end portion 813 of chamber section 801 is cylindrically shaped. A cup-shaped member 815 is configured to rotate

about end portion **813**. Optionally one or more spacers **817**, for example Teflon spacers, are used to insure the smooth rotation of member **815**. Embedded within an internal surface of member **815** adjacent to the external surface of end cap **308** is a plurality of permanent magnets **819** of alternating magnetic polarity. A drive shaft **821** of member **815** is coupled to a drive motor and associated controller (e.g., drive motor **301** and controller **303**), not shown. Due to the magnetic field generated by magnets **819** and its interaction with the magnetic field generated by magnets **701**, rotation of member **815** causes the rotation of impeller **700** within chamber **800**. Similarly, impeller **700** can be positioned within chamber **800** by controlling the rotational position of member **815**.

[0073] As noted with respect to **FIGS. 1 and 6**, preferably the embodiment of chamber **800** shown in **FIG. 8** also includes a pair of chamber inlets **103/105**.

[0074] In addition to the previously cited selection criteria for the chamber material, this embodiment of the invention requires that the material should be relatively transparent to the magnetic fields generated by magnets **701** and **819**, thus insuring that the rotation of member **815** results in the rotation of impeller **700**.

[0075] The embodiment shown in **FIGS. 7-8** is only meant to illustrate one preferred method of magnetically coupling to the impeller of the invention. It will be appreciated that there are many methods which can be used to magnetically rotate the chamber's internal impeller. For example, **FIGS. 9 and 10** illustrate an alternate embodiment in which permanent magnets **901** are embedded in the end surface of end cap **308** as shown. As a consequence of the location of magnets **901**, the overall shape of chamber **1000** is different from that of the previous embodiment with chamber **1000** being comprised of sections **1001** and **1002**. Although a variety of means can be used to couple the chamber sections together, as in the previous embodiment preferably the two sections are bolted together with a plurality of bolts **1003** and sealed with one or more sealing members **1004**. Impeller **900** is held in place within chamber **1000**, while still being free to rotate, using bearings and/or spacers **1005-1007**.

[0076] As illustrated, the shape of the end portion of chamber section **1001** is such that the chamber wall adjacent to impeller magnets **901** is thin enough to allow an external magnetic field to interact with the magnetic field produced by magnets **901** while still being thick enough to handle peak pressures. A cup-shaped member **1009** is configured to rotate about the end portion of section **1001**. Optionally one or more spacers **1011**, for example Teflon spacers, are used to properly space and allow the rotation of member **1009**. Embedded within member **1009** is a plurality of permanent magnets **1013** of alternating magnetic polarity, two such magnets being shown in the cross-sectional view of **FIG. 10**. A drive shaft **1015** provides a means of coupling member **1009** to a drive motor and associated controller (e.g., drive motor **301** and controller **303**), not shown. Due to the magnetic field generated by magnets **1013** and its interaction with the magnetic field generated by magnets **901**, rotation of member **1009** causes the rotation of impeller **900** within chamber **1000**.

[0077] **FIG. 11** is a cross-sectional view of an alternate embodiment configured to provide additional torque over

the impeller. As shown, this embodiment combines magnetic coupling features of the previous two embodiments. In particular, chamber section **1101** is shaped to allow close proximity of cup-shaped member **1103** in two planes, thus allowing embedded magnets **1105** to interact with impeller magnets **1106** in one plane and embedded magnets **1107** in a second plane. As in the previous embodiments, a plurality of spacers **1109** insure proper spacing of member **1103** relative to chamber section **1101** while still permitting its free rotation. This embodiment allows a stronger magnetic field to be generated by magnetic coupler **1103** on the impeller. A drive shaft **1111** allows member **1103** to be coupled to a drive motor/controller (not shown).

[0078] It will be appreciated that the magnetic coupling systems illustrated in **FIGS. 7-11** or those illustrated below can be duplicated on the opposite end of the impeller, thereby easily doubling the strength of the drive mechanism by providing magnetic coupling and impeller rotation on both impeller ends.

[0079] In addition to using any of a variety of magnetic coupling systems based on permanent magnets, it will be appreciated that the inventor also envisions countless variations utilizing electromagnetic coupling means. In such a system, the impeller assembly includes a rotor at one end of the impeller assembly, or rotors at both ends of the impeller assembly, the rotor(s) including either permanent magnets or material susceptible to a magnetic field (e.g., a ferromagnetic material). An electromagnetic stator, external to the chamber and surrounding the rotor(s), provides the force required to turn the rotor(s) and thus the impeller assembly.

[0080] **FIGS. 12 and 13** provide end views of the rotors of exemplary impeller assemblies, rotor **1201** utilizing a ferromagnetic rotor and rotor **1301** utilizing a permanent magnet rotor. As shown, rotor **1201** includes 8 teeth **1203** while rotor **1301** includes 2 teeth **1303**. It should be understood that the invention is not limited to specific rotor designs, rather rotors **1201** and **1301** are merely illustrative of the invention. In preferred embodiments of the invention, the rotors are embedded within a second material, thus eliminating the edges of the teeth. **FIGS. 14 and 15** provide end views of two such embedded rotors. **FIG. 14** shows a rotor assembly **1400** in which an 8 tooth ferromagnetic rotor **1401** (shown in phantom) is embedded within a non-ferromagnetic material **1403** (e.g., a ceramic). Similarly, **FIG. 15** shows a rotor assembly **1500** in which a 2 tooth permanent magnet rotor **1501** (shown in phantom) is embedded within a non-ferromagnetic material **1503**. By embedding the rotors within a cylindrically shaped second material, the rotor does not cause unwanted turbulence within the cavitation medium. Although the present invention is not limited to specific stator designs, an exemplary stator **1600** is shown in **FIG. 16**, stator **1600** having 12 stator poles divided into three stator pole sets **1601-1603**.

[0081] **FIG. 17** is a cross-sectional view of a chamber **1700** which is similar to the configuration shown in **FIG. 8**. However the impeller assembly of chamber **1700** is driven with an electromagnetic assembly in which a rotor **1400** (shown in phantom) is embedded within impeller end-cap **308**. As shown, the electromagnetic assembly includes a stator **1600** coupled to a motor driver **1701** and a controller **1703**. It will be appreciated that this is simply one possible configuration of the invention utilizing an electromagnetic system for driving the impeller assembly.

[0082] The embodiments shown in **FIGS. 3-17** are only meant to illustrate some of the various methods of mechanically, magnetically or electromagnetically coupling to and driving the impeller assembly of the invention. It will be appreciated that the invention is not limited to a particular impeller design/shape, chamber design/shape, impeller sealing means, impeller driving means, etc. Nor does the invention require that the shape of the impeller assembly match that of the cavitation chamber. Thus, for example, a cylindrical impeller can be used with a spherical or rectangular chamber.

[0083] Degassing System

[0084] As previously noted, degassing of the cavitation fluid can be performed within the cavitation chamber, within a separate degassing chamber, or degassed in stages such that the initial stages of degassing are performed prior to chamber filling and the final stages of degassing are performed within the cavitation chamber. **FIG. 18** illustrates one embodiment of the invention in which degassing is performed within the cavitation chamber itself. **FIG. 18**, as well as **FIG. 19** which follows, are based on the cavitation system shown in **FIG. 1** although it will be understood that these degassing systems are not limited to the specific designs for the chamber, impeller assembly and/or hydraulic driver shown in **FIG. 1**. Additionally, for the sake of illustration simplicity, **FIGS. 18-19** do not include all aspects of the driver and/or impeller assemblies as these aspects are described in detail elsewhere within this specification.

[0085] The first step in degassing the cavitation fluid within the chamber is to fill the chamber. The chamber can be filled via inlet **103**, for example by first evacuating chamber **101**, thus allowing the cavitation fluid to easily flow into the chamber. If chamber **101** is not first evacuated, the air exiting the chamber must either be allowed to pass through the entering fluid, or pass out through a separate inlet positioned near or at the uppermost portion of the chamber (not shown). Alternately the cavitation fluid can be pumped up through inlet **105**, thus allowing the exiting air to pass out of inlet **103**. Once filled, the cavitation fluid is degassed by vacuum pump **1801**. Preferably pump **1801** is attached to chamber **101** via a three-way valve, e.g., valve **107**, thus allowing the chamber to either be coupled to pump **1801** or open to the atmosphere via conduit **1803**. Although pump **1801** can degas the cavitation fluid within chamber **101** to a sufficient degree for many applications, preferably additional degassing stages are implemented. A detailed description of the additional degassing stages are provided below. In general, the additional degassing requires that the cavitation fluid be cavitated, thus further reducing the concentration of air/vapor within the fluid. Although hydraulically actuated cavitation piston **113** can be used for this purpose, in at least one embodiment of the invention one or more acoustic drivers **1805** are coupled to chamber **101**, drivers **1805** providing a convenient means of cavitating and degassing the fluid as described more fully below.

[0086] **FIG. 19** illustrates an alternate degassing system. As shown, the hydraulically driven cavitation chamber **101** is coupled via lines **1901** and **1903** to a degassing chamber **1905**. Preferably degassing chamber **1905** serves a dual purpose; both as a degassing chamber and a fluid reservoir. Chamber **1905** is coupled to a vacuum pump **1907** via a

three-way valve **1909**, valve **1909** allowing chamber **1905** to be coupled to pump **1907** (e.g., for degassing purposes) or open to the atmosphere via conduit **1911**. Pump **1913** is used to pump the cavitation fluid from degassing chamber/reservoir **1905** into cavitation chamber **101**.

[0087] In one approach, all cavitation fluid degassing is performed within chamber **1905**. Once degassed, chamber **101** is filled with the cavitation fluid, preferably by simply pumping the fluid through line **1903** with pump **1913** into evacuated chamber **101**. After it is filled, chamber **101** can be decoupled from the degassing system, for example with valves **107/109**. In an alternate approach, the cavitation fluid can be degassed first within chamber **1905**, and then degassed further within cavitation chamber **101**. Preferably chamber **101** is decoupled from degassing chamber **1905** prior to performing further degassing within chamber **101**. In yet another alternate approach, after the initial degassing procedure has been completed and cavitation chamber **101** is operable, the cavitation fluid is periodically pumped through the system and degassed within chamber **1905**. One benefit of this approach is the removal of gases that have been generated as a by-product of reactions taking place within chamber **101**.

[0088] Although degassing with vacuum pump **1907** attached to chamber/reservoir **1905** is sufficient for many applications, as previously noted relative to the system shown in **FIG. 18**, further degassing via cavitation is preferred. In one preferred embodiment cavitation degassing is performed within chamber **1905** by attaching one or more drivers **1915** (e.g., acoustic drivers) to chamber **1905** as shown. In an alternate preferred embodiment, after completion of the initial stage of degassing within chamber **1905**, cavitation degassing is performed within chamber **101**, either using the hydraulically actuated cavitation piston **113** or additional drivers (e.g., acoustic drivers) attached to chamber **101**, for example as shown in **FIG. 18** (i.e., drivers **1805**).

[0089] If the cavitation fluid is degassed in a separate chamber and then pumped into the cavitation chamber as in the embodiment illustrated in **FIG. 19**, preferably the system also includes a bubble trap **1917** that immediately follows the outlet of pump **1913** as shown, thus helping to eliminate any bubbles generated by the pump itself. Preferably bubble trap **1917** is coupled to chamber **1905** via valve **1919** and conduit **1921**. During use, bubbles that are trapped float to the top portion of trap **1917** where they are periodically removed via valve **1919** and conduit **1921**, conduit **1921** being indirectly coupled to vacuum pump **1907**. One suitable configuration for bubble trap **1917** is shown in co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/002,448, filed Dec. 1, 2004, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein for any and all purposes.

[0090] If a separate degassing chamber and/or circulatory system is used, preferably a filter **1923** is included, the filter preceding the chamber inlet port into which the cavitation fluid is pumped (e.g., inlet **105**). Filter **1923** is used to remove contaminants from the cavitation fluid that could potentially disrupt the cavitation process. The contaminants may be native to the cavitation fluid. Alternately, or in addition to native contaminants, the contaminants to be removed may be a product of the cavitation process itself, for example resulting from the flow of the cavitation fluid

through a heat exchange system or from the effects of the cavitation process on the internal surfaces of the cavitation chamber. Alternately, or in addition to the above-described contaminants, the contaminants may be a by-product of a reaction taking place within the cavitation chamber. It will be appreciated that the exact nature of filter 1923 depends upon the type of cavitation fluid as well as the type and size of contamination, i.e., impurity, to be removed from the cavitation fluid. As filters are well known, further description is not provided herein.

[0091] In at least one of the preferred embodiments in which an external degassing and/or circulatory system is used, a heat exchange system 1925 is coupled to the system, thus allowing the temperature of the cavitation fluid to be controlled. The cavitation fluid can be continually pumped through heat exchange system 1925 during chamber operation, or used to alter the temperature of the fluid prior to chamber operation, or used to periodically alter the temperature of the fluid. Furthermore heat exchange system 1925 can be used to cool the cavitation fluid below ambient temperature, to cool the cavitation fluid by removing excess heat from the cavitation chamber, or to heat the cavitation fluid to a desired temperature.

[0092] In a preferred embodiment heat exchange system 1925 is used to cool the cavitation fluid below ambient temperature, thus lowering the vapor pressure of the fluid and allowing higher velocities to be achieved by the collapsing bubbles within chamber 101. As a result, the cavitating bubbles generate higher temperatures at collapse stagnation. Although in this embodiment heat exchange system 1925 is typically located after pump 1913 and as close to cavitation chamber 101 as reasonable, thus minimizing the introduction of heat into the cooled cavitation medium from pump 1913, the surroundings, etc., it will be appreciated that the location of system 1925 relative to pump 1913 depends on the ambient temperature, the temperature to which the cavitation fluid is to be maintained, and the preferred operating temperature of the pump.

[0093] In another embodiment heat exchange system 1925 cools the cavitation fluid by withdrawing excess heat generated within the chamber. The excess heat can be a product of the cavitation process itself as the cavitating bubbles generate heat within the fluid, for example due to viscous effects. The excess heat can also be the product of reactions taking place within the chamber which are promoted by the cavitation process. Such reactions include both chemical reactions and nuclear reactions. The excess heat can also be the result of heat conducted into the cavitation medium from cavitation piston 113. In embodiments in which the cavitation fluid is a hot liquid such as a molten metal or salt, heat exchange system 1925 is preferably located before pump 1913 rather than after pump 1913 as shown in FIG. 19. Such a mounting location is preferred as it cools the cavitation fluid before introducing it into pump 1913, thus minimizing the pump operating temperature for such applications. It will be appreciated that whether heat exchange system 1925 is located before or after pump 1913 depends upon the temperatures of the cavitation fluid before and after heat exchange system 1925, the ambient temperature and the preferred operating temperatures of pump 1913 and the cavitation fluid.

[0094] In another embodiment heat exchange system 1925 is used to heat the cavitation fluid to the desired operational

temperature. Such heating is useful, for example, to promote specific reactions (e.g., chemical reactions) within the cavitation fluid or to maintain the cavitating medium in the fluid phase (i.e., heating to above the melting temperature of the medium). Preferably heat exchange system 1925 is positioned relative to pump 1913 as shown, thus allowing pump 1913 to pump a relatively cool fluid. As previously noted, the location of heat exchange system 1925 relative to pump 1913 depends upon the temperatures of the cavitation fluid before and after heat exchange system 1925, ambient temperature and the preferred operating temperatures of pump 1913 and the cavitation fluid.

[0095] Detailed descriptions of the implementation of a heat exchange system 1925 with a cavitation fluid circulatory system are provided in co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/961,353, filed Oct. 7, 2004, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein for any and all purposes. With respect to the actual heat exchange system, such systems are well known by those of skill in the art and therefore detailed descriptions are not provided herein.

[0096] If sufficient heat is withdrawn from the cavitating liquid by heat exchange system 1925, the excess heat can be used to drive any of a variety of thermally powered systems such as heaters, thermoelectric generators and steam turbines (not shown), thus producing electricity that can be used for a variety of applications, including reduction of the electrical demands of the cavitation system itself.

[0097] If a separate degassing chamber is used and coupled to the primary cavitation chamber via a circulatory system as shown in FIG. 19, preferably the circulatory system provides a simple means of either circulating the fluid or draining the cavitation chamber (i.e., chamber 101). A benefit of such a system is that it allows chamber 101 to be drained without draining the circulatory system, thus minimizing cavitation fluid loss, exposure to the atmosphere and possible contamination. Methods of implementing a circulatory system with cavitation chamber 101 are provided in co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/001,720, filed Dec. 1, 2004, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein for any and all purposes.

[0098] Cavitation Fluid Preparation

[0099] In order to achieve high intensity cavity implosions, the cavitation medium must first be degassed. It should be understood that the present invention is not limited to a particular degassing technique, and the techniques described herein are for illustrative purposes only.

[0100] The first step in the degassing method is to fill the degassing chamber with cavitation fluid. As previously described, the degassing chamber can either be the actual cavitation chamber 101 or a separate degassing chamber (e.g., chamber 1905) which is either coupled or non-coupled to cavitation chamber 101. Once the chamber is filled, the cavitation fluid is degassed with a vacuum pump (e.g., pump 1805 with the cavitation chamber or pump 1907 with separate degassing chamber 1905). The amount of time required during this step depends on the volume of cavitation fluid to be degassed and the capabilities of the vacuum system. Preferably the vacuum pump evacuates the chamber in which the cavitation fluid resides until the pressure within the chamber is close to the vapor pressure of the cavitation fluid, for example to a pressure of within 0.2 psi of the vapor

pressure of the cavitation fluid or more preferably to a pressure of within 0.02 psi of the vapor pressure of the cavitation fluid. Typically this step of the degassing procedure is performed for at least 1 hour, preferably for at least 2 hours, more preferably for at least 4 hours, and still more preferably until the reservoir pressure is as close to the vapor pressure of the cavitation fluid as previously noted.

[0101] Once the fluid within the chamber is sufficiently degassed using the vacuum pump, preferably further degassing is performed by cavitating the fluid, the cavitation process tearing vacuum cavities within the cavitation fluid. As the newly formed cavities expand, gas from the fluid that remains after the initial degassing step enters into the cavities. During cavity collapse, however, not all of the gas re-enters the fluid. Accordingly a result of the cavitation process is the removal of dissolved gas from the cavitation fluid via rectified diffusion and the generation of bubbles.

[0102] As previously described, cavitation as a means of degassing the fluid can be performed within cavitation chamber 101 or separate degassing chamber 1905. Furthermore, any of a variety of techniques can be used to cavitate the fluid. Although cavitation piston 113 can be used during degassing, in the preferred embodiment of the invention one or more acoustic drivers (e.g., drivers 1805 or 1915) are coupled to the degassing chamber. Acoustic drivers can be fabricated and mounted, for example, in accordance with co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/931,918, filed Sep. 1, 2004, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein for any and all purposes. Assuming acoustic drivers are used, the operating frequency of the drivers depends on a variety of factors such as the sound speed of the liquid within the chamber, the shape/geometry of the chamber, the sound field geometry of the drivers, etc. In at least one embodiment the operating frequency is within the range of 1 kHz to 10 MHz. The selected frequency can be the resonant frequency of the chamber, an integer multiple of the resonant frequency, a non-integer multiple of the resonant frequency, or periodically altered during operation.

[0103] For high vapor pressure liquids, preferably prior to the above-identified cavitation step the use of the vacuum pump (e.g., pump 1801 or pump 1907) is temporarily discontinued. Next the fluid within the chamber (e.g., chamber 101 or chamber 1905) is cavitated for a period of time, typically for at least 5 minutes and preferably for more than 30 minutes. The bubbles created during this step float to the top of chamber due to their buoyancy. The gas removed from the fluid during this step is periodically removed from the system, as desired, for example using vacuum pump 1801 if the chamber used for this degassing step is chamber 101, or using vacuum pump 1907 if the chamber used for this degassing step is chamber 1905. Typically the vacuum pump is only used after there has been a noticeable increase in pressure within the degassing chamber, preferably an increase of at least 0.2 psi over the vapor pressure of the cavitation fluid, alternately an increase of at least 0.02 psi over the vapor pressure of the cavitation fluid, or alternately an increase of a couple of percent of the vapor pressure. If acoustic drivers are used, preferably the use of cavitation as a means of degassing the cavitation fluid is continued until the amount of dissolved gas within the cavitation fluid is so low that the fluid will no longer cavitate at the same cavitation driver power. If a hydraulic piston driver(s) is used, preferably either the cavitation/degassing steps are

performed for a predetermined period of time (e.g., at least 12 hours, preferably for at least 24 hours, more preferably for at least 36 hours, etc.) or until the pressure within the chamber remains stable at the vapor pressure of the cavitation fluid for a predetermined period of time (e.g., at least 10 minutes, greater than 30 minutes, preferably greater than an hour, etc.).

[0104] The above degassing procedure is sufficient for most applications, however in an alternate embodiment of the invention another stage of degassing is performed prior to cavitating the fluid using the hydraulic actuated driver. The first step of this additional degassing stage is to form cavities within the cavitation fluid contained in the degassing chamber. These cavities can be formed using any of a variety of means, including neutron bombardment, focusing a laser beam into the cavitation fluid to vaporize small amounts of fluid, by locally heating small regions with a hot wire, or by other means. Once one or more cavities are formed within the cavitation fluid, acoustic drivers 1805 or 1915, or cavitation piston 113, cause the cavitation of the newly formed cavities, resulting in the removal of additional dissolved gas within the fluid and the formation of bubbles. The bubbles, due to their buoyancy, drift to the top of the chamber where the gas can be removed, when desired, using a vacuum pump (e.g., pump 1801 or pump 1907). This stage of degassing can continue for either a preset time period (e.g., greater than 6 hours and preferably greater than 12 hours), or until the amount of dissolved gas being removed is negligible as evidenced by the pressure within the chamber remaining stable at the vapor pressure of the cavitation fluid for a preset time period (e.g., greater than 10 minutes, or greater than 30 minutes, or greater than 1 hour, etc.).

[0105] Hydraulic Driver Methodology

[0106] In a preferred approach, prior to cavitation and after the cavitation fluid has been degassed as previously noted, and after the cavitation chamber 101 has been filled with the degassed cavitation fluid (assuming that degassing was performed in a separate degassing chamber), hydraulic piston 117 and coupled cavitation piston 113 are partially withdrawn from the completely extended position. The amount of piston withdrawal depends, in part, on the compressibility of the cavitation medium. For example, a cavitation fluid comprised of a very non-compressible liquid (e.g., a liquid metal such as mercury) typically requires much less pre-cavitation piston withdrawal than a more compressible liquid (e.g., acetone). For a compressible liquid such as acetone, a pre-cavitation piston withdrawal of approximately 25 percent is preferred. During this step the chamber can be left open to the degassing and/or circulatory system, thus allowing it to automatically fill during piston partial withdrawal. Alternately, the chamber can be filled-up after completion of the step of partially withdrawing the piston, thus compensating for the fluid withdrawn during piston withdrawal.

[0107] The next step is to isolate the cavitation chamber from any degassing systems and/or a cavitation fluid circulatory systems to which it is coupled, for example using valves 107/109. Chamber isolation prior to operation is required to insure that the desired operating pressures can be reached.

[0108] After chamber isolation, hydraulic piston 117 and coupled cavitation piston 113 are withdrawn, causing a

cavity (e.g., a bubble) to be formed within the degassed cavitation fluid. The hydraulic piston **117** and coupled cavitation piston **113** are then rapidly extended to the fullest possible extent as limited either by mechanical piston stops or by the resultant back pressure. During piston extension, the previously created cavity or cavities are compressed, causing cavity implosion. Subsequent cavitation cycles only require cycling cavitation piston **113**, i.e., it is unnecessary to open the chamber, partially withdraw the piston, isolate the chamber and cycle the piston. Although the system can be used for single cavitation cycles, preferably multiple cycles are performed, thus generating high chamber pressures and extremely energetic implosions. The maximum cycle rate depends on the speed of the solenoid valves, the compressibility of the cavitation fluid, the pressure applied by the cavitation piston, the size of the chamber, the number of hydraulic lines coupling valves **131** to cylinder **125** and the size and pressure of accumulator **137**. In the preferred embodiment, pistons **117/113** are fully extended at a rate of approximately 0.1 seconds per stroke. The system can be cycled, i.e., piston retracted and then extended, at a rate of up to 20 cycles per second.

[0109] In an alternate preferred approach, prior to cavitation and after the cavitation fluid has been degassed and the cavitation chamber **101** filled (assuming the use of a separate degassing chamber), hydraulic piston **117** and coupled cavitation piston **113** are completely withdrawn. During this step the cavitation chamber can either be open to, or isolated from, any coupled degassing and/or cavitation fluid circulatory systems. After pistons **117/113** are completely withdrawn, the cavitation chamber inlets (e.g., inlets **103/105** controlled via valves **107/109**) are opened if previously closed, or left open if previously open.

[0110] The next step is to isolate the cavitation chamber from any coupled degassing and/or cavitation fluid circulatory systems, for example by closing any inlet valves (e.g., valves **107/109**). Once the chamber is isolated, hydraulic piston **117** and coupled cavitation piston **113** are extended to the fullest extent possible as limited either by mechanical piston stops or by the resultant back pressure. As a result of the extension of pistons **117/113**, the cavitation fluid is compressed and the internal pressure of the cavitation chamber is increased.

[0111] It will be appreciated that the amount that pistons **117/113** can be extended depends, in part, on both the compressibility of the cavitation fluid and the ratio of the areas of pistons **117** and **113**. Thus, for example, if the fluid is extremely incompressible, such as mercury or another liquid metal, during this step the pistons would not be able to be extended very far prior to the back pressure stopping further piston travel. In such situations the chamber can be opened slightly during the initial fluid compression step, thus allowing the pistons to travel further than would otherwise be allowed. If this approach is taken, the chamber is closed (i.e., isolated) prior to the pistons becoming fully extended (for example, after the pistons have traveled between 75 and 90 percent of their full range).

[0112] After chamber isolation and cavitation fluid compression, the cavitation chamber is partially opened, for example to the degassing system and/or cavitation fluid circulatory system to which it is coupled. Preferably this step is performed by opening a valve located near the top of

cavitation chamber **101**, and more preferably at the uppermost portion of the cavitation chamber (e.g., valve **107**). The valve is only opened by a small degree and for a short period of time; just sufficient to allow the internal cavitation chamber pressure to drop to a predetermined level or to change by a predetermined amount. The amount that the pressure is allowed to change governs the size of the cavity that will be cavitated during the cavitation process, i.e., greater pressure changes result in larger cavities. It will be appreciated that the invention does not require a specific cavity size, rather the size to be cavitated is dictated by the type of desired reaction and thus the intended reactants and the desired temperature and pressure. Other factors which determine the desired pressure change include cavitation fluid compressibility, cavitation chamber size, hydraulic driver capabilities, cavitation piston effective area, and the degree to which the cavitation fluid has been degassed during the prior degassing steps.

[0113] Once the pressure has been allowed to change by the predetermined amount, the cavitation chamber is once again isolated, for example from any degassing and/or cavitation fluid circulatory systems if such are employed. After chamber isolation, hydraulic piston **117** and coupled cavitation piston **113** are withdrawn, causing a cavity (e.g., a bubble) to be formed within the degassed cavitation fluid. The hydraulic piston **117** and coupled cavitation piston **113** are then rapidly extended to the fullest possible extent as limited either by mechanical piston stops or by the resultant back pressure. During piston extension, the previously created cavity or cavities are compressed, causing cavity implosion. Subsequent cavitation cycles only require cycling cavitation piston **113**, i.e., it is unnecessary to open/close the cavitation chamber and adjust the internal chamber pressure. As in the previous method, the system can be used either for single cavitation cycles or multiple cavitation cycles, the maximum cycle rate depending on the speed of the solenoid valves, the compressibility of the cavitation fluid, the pressure applied by the cavitation piston, the size of the chamber, the number of hydraulic lines coupling valves **131** to cylinder **125** and the size of accumulator **137**.

[0114] Alternate Configurations

[0115] As previously noted, the invention is not limited to cylindrical cavitation chambers such as the one shown in FIG. 1. For example, FIGS. 20-22 illustrate an embodiment of the invention utilizing a spherical cavitation chamber **2001**, FIG. 20 showing a cross-sectional view of a chamber **2001** and a pair of impeller blades **2003**. The degassing aspects as well as the hydraulic cavitation driver are the same as previously described relative to chamber **101**. Spherical chamber **2001** can be fabricated as described in co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/925,070, filed Aug. 23, 2004, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein for any and all purposes. Alternately, spherical chamber **2001** can be fabricated from multiple portions bolted together, or otherwise joined, and sealed with one or more seals (e.g., o-rings, gaskets, etc.) as shown in FIGS. 21 and 22. Operation of chamber **2001** is the same as described relative to chamber **101**.

[0116] FIG. 21 is a cross-sectional view of chamber **2001** fabricated from chamber portions **2101** and **2102**. For the sake of illustration simplicity, neither FIG. 21 nor FIG. 22 include those aspects of the invention that correspond to the

cavitation piston and associated hydraulic driver system. Nor do **FIGS. 21 and 22** include any degassing and/or circulatory system hardware (e.g., inlets, valves, vacuum pumps, etc.). In this embodiment, chamber portions **2101/2102** are bolted together with a plurality of bolts **2103** to form the chamber. At least one sealing member **2104** (e.g., o-ring, gasket, etc.) seals portion **2101** to portion **2102**. Prior to assembling portions **2101/2102**, impeller **2105** (which includes impeller blades **2003**) is located within the spherical cavity of chamber **2001** such that spindle **2107** is fitted within bearing **2109**. Spindle drive shaft **2111** is fitted through a seal/bearing housing **2113** incorporated within chamber portion **2102**. Preferably an end cap **2115** is bolted to chamber portion **2102**, end cap **2115** including an additional sealing member **2117**. As previously noted, preferably the chamber includes a pair of chamber inlets (not shown), thus allowing the chamber to be filled, drained and/or coupled to a cavitation fluid circulatory and/or degassing system. As previously noted, impeller **2105** preferably includes at least 2 blades **2003**. In use, drive shaft **2111** is coupled to a motor (e.g., motor **301**) and a controller (e.g., controller **303**) as previously described relative to the mechanically coupled cylindrical impeller shown in **FIGS. 3, 4 and 6**.

[**0117**] **FIG. 22** is a cross-sectional view of an embodiment of the invention used with spherical chamber **2001** and magnetically coupled to the impeller drive system. In this embodiment, as in the mechanically coupled impeller embodiment shown in **FIG. 21**, the cavitation chamber is comprised of two sections **2201** and **2203**. Although a variety of means can be used to join together and seal chamber sections **2201** and **2203**, the preferred approach is with a plurality of bolts **2205** and one or more sealing members **2207** (e.g., o-ring, gasket, etc.). Prior to assembling portions **2201** and **2203**, impeller **2209** is located within the spherical cavity of chamber **2001** such that spindle **2211** is fitted within bearing **2213** and spindle **2215** is fitted within bearing **2217**. In one embodiment, bearings **2213** and **2217** are fabricated from a material with a low coefficient of friction, such as Teflon.

[**0118**] In the illustrated embodiment, embedded within cylindrically-shaped end portion **2219** of impeller **2209** is a plurality of permanent magnets **2221** of alternating magnetic polarity. The outer surface of end portion **2223** of chamber section **2203** is cylindrically shaped and is configured such that the chamber wall adjacent to the section of portion **2219** containing the embedded magnets **2221** is relatively thin. A cup-shaped member **2225** is configured to rotate about end portion **2223**. Preferably one or more spacers **2227**, for example Teflon spacers, are used to insure the smooth rotation of member **2225**. Embedded within an internal surface of member **2225** adjacent to magnets **2221**, is a plurality of permanent magnets **2229** of alternating magnetic polarity. A drive shaft **2231** of member **2225** is coupled to a drive motor and controller (not shown). Due to the magnetic field generated by magnets **2229** and its interaction with the magnetic field generated by magnets **2221**, rotation of member **2225** causes the rotation of impeller **2209** within chamber **2001**. As previously noted, preferably the chamber includes a pair of chamber inlets (not shown), thus allowing the chamber to be filled, drained and/or coupled to a cavitation fluid circulatory system. Preferably impeller **2009** uses at least two blades **2003**.

[**0119**] It will be appreciated that any of the previously described magnetic coupling/drive systems can also be used with either a spherical chamber such as that shown in **FIG. 20**, or with other shaped cavitation chambers. Such magnetic coupling/drive systems can utilize permanent magnets, electromagnets or a combination of the two.

[**0120**] As will be understood by those familiar with the art, the present invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from the spirit or essential characteristics thereof. Accordingly, the disclosures and descriptions herein are intended to be illustrative, but not limiting, of the scope of the invention which is set forth in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A cavitation system comprising:
 - a cavitation chamber;
 - an impeller assembly located within said cavitation chamber, wherein rotation of said impeller assembly affects a position of a bubble within a cavitation fluid contained within said cavitation chamber;
 - a drive shaft coupled to said impeller assembly, said drive shaft having a first portion within said cavitation chamber and a second portion outside of said cavitation chamber;
 - a motor coupled to said second portion of said drive shaft for rotating said impeller assembly; and
 - a hydraulic actuated cavitation driver coupled to said cavitation chamber for driving cavitation within said cavitation chamber, said hydraulic actuated cavitation driver configured to form cavities within said cavitation fluid within said cavitation chamber when cycled in a first direction and implode said cavities within said cavitation fluid within said cavitation chamber when cycled in a second direction, said hydraulic actuated cavitation driver comprising:
 - a cavitation drive piston positioned within an inlet of said cavitation chamber; and
 - a hydraulic cylinder containing a hydraulic piston, said hydraulic piston coupled to said cavitation drive piston.
2. The cavitation system of claim 1, said hydraulic actuated cavitation driver further comprising actuating valves coupled to said hydraulic cylinder.
3. The cavitation system of claim 2, said hydraulic actuated cavitation driver further comprising a pump coupled to said actuating valves.
4. The cavitation system of claim 3, said hydraulic actuated cavitation driver further comprising a hydraulic fluid reservoir coupled to said pump and said actuating valves.
5. The cavitation system of claim 3, said hydraulic actuated cavitation driver further comprising an accumulator coupled to said pump and said actuating valves.
6. The cavitation system of claim 1, said impeller assembly further comprising a plurality of impeller blades.
7. The cavitation system of claim 1, wherein said cavitation chamber is spherically shaped.
8. The cavitation system of claim 7, wherein said impeller assembly further comprises at least two spherically shaped impeller blades.
9. The cavitation system of claim 8, wherein said impeller assembly further comprises a first end portion coupled to

said at least two spherically shaped impeller blades and a second end portion coupled to said at least two spherically shaped impeller blades, wherein said drive shaft is coupled to said second end portion, wherein said first end portion and said second end portion define an axis of rotation, and wherein said axis of rotation is located within a horizontal plane during cavitation system operation.

10. The cavitation system of claim 1, wherein said cavitation chamber is cylindrically shaped.

11. The cavitation system of claim 10, wherein said impeller assembly further comprises at least two cylindrically shaped impeller blades.

12. The cavitation system of claim 11, wherein said impeller assembly further comprises a first end portion coupled to said at least two cylindrically shaped impeller blades and a second end portion coupled to said at least two cylindrically shaped impeller blades, wherein said drive shaft is coupled to said second end portion, wherein said first end portion and said second end portion define an axis of rotation, and wherein said axis of rotation is located within a horizontal plane during cavitation system operation.

13. The cavitation system of claim 1, said impeller assembly comprising:

a first impeller, wherein said drive shaft is coupled to said first impeller;

a second impeller;

a second drive shaft coupled to said second impeller; and

a second motor coupled to said second drive shaft for rotating said second impeller independently of said first impeller.

14. The cavitation system of claim 13, further comprising means for synchronizing said first impeller and said second impeller.

15. The cavitation system of claim 13, wherein a first axis of rotation corresponding to said first impeller is coaxially aligned with a second axis of rotation corresponding to said second impeller.

16. The cavitation system of claim 1, further comprising a coupling sleeve interposed between said cavitation chamber and said hydraulic cylinder, wherein said coupling sleeve houses a piston rod coupling said cavitation drive piston to said hydraulic piston.

17. The cavitation system of claim 16, further comprising a vacuum pump coupled to said coupling sleeve, wherein said coupling sleeve is configured to allow evacuation.

18. The cavitation system of claim 1, further comprising means for degassing said cavitation fluid.

19. The cavitation system of claim 18, wherein said degassing means further comprises a vacuum pump coupled to said cavitation chamber.

20. The cavitation system of claim 19, wherein said degassing means further comprises at least one acoustic cavitation driver coupled to said cavitation chamber.

21. The cavitation system of claim 1, further comprising a circulatory system for circulating cavitation fluid through said cavitation system, wherein said cavitation chamber has a first mode of operation and a second mode of operation, wherein said cavitation chamber is coupled to said circulatory system in said first mode of operation and wherein said cavitation chamber is isolated from said circulatory system in said second mode of operation.

22. The cavitation system of claim 21, further comprising means for degassing said cavitation fluid, wherein said degassing means is coupled to said circulatory system.

23. The cavitation system of claim 21, wherein said hydraulic actuated cavitation driver is configured to drive cavitation within said cavitation chamber when said cavitation chamber is in said second mode of operation.

24. The cavitation system of claim 1, further comprising a degassing system for degassing said cavitation fluid, wherein said cavitation chamber has a first mode of operation and a second mode of operation, wherein said cavitation chamber is coupled to said degassing system in said first mode of operation and wherein said cavitation chamber is isolated from said circulatory system in said second mode of operation.

25. The cavitation system of claim 24, wherein said hydraulic actuated cavitation driver is configured to drive cavitation within said cavitation chamber when said cavitation chamber is in said second mode of operation.

26. The cavitation system of claim 24, wherein said cavitation fluid degassing system further comprises a degassing chamber.

27. The cavitation system of claim 26, wherein said cavitation fluid degassing system further comprises at least one acoustic cavitation driver coupled to said degassing chamber.

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