

[54] **SUBMERSIBLE CREMATORY URN**

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27/5; 215/2, 79

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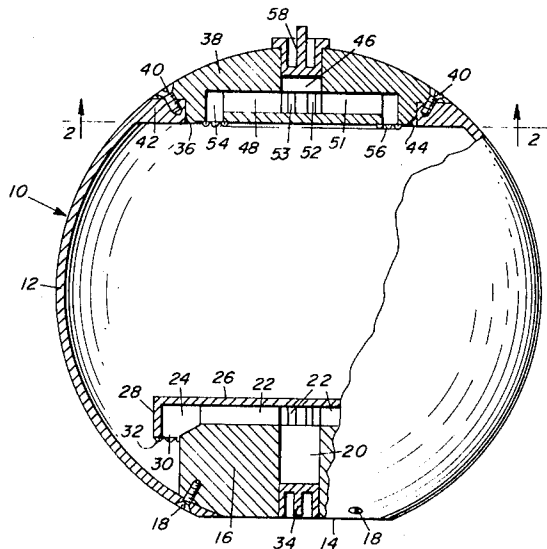
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A submersible urn, preferably spherical in shape for containing cremated remains for burial at sea is disclosed. The urn is constructed with an air vent at the top, ballast at the bottom, and a water inlet port whereby water may enter the urn so that it will sink. The urn is constructed of a degradable material whereby chemical action of the water in which it is submerged will dissolve it over a period of time.

**20 Claims, 2 Drawing Figures**



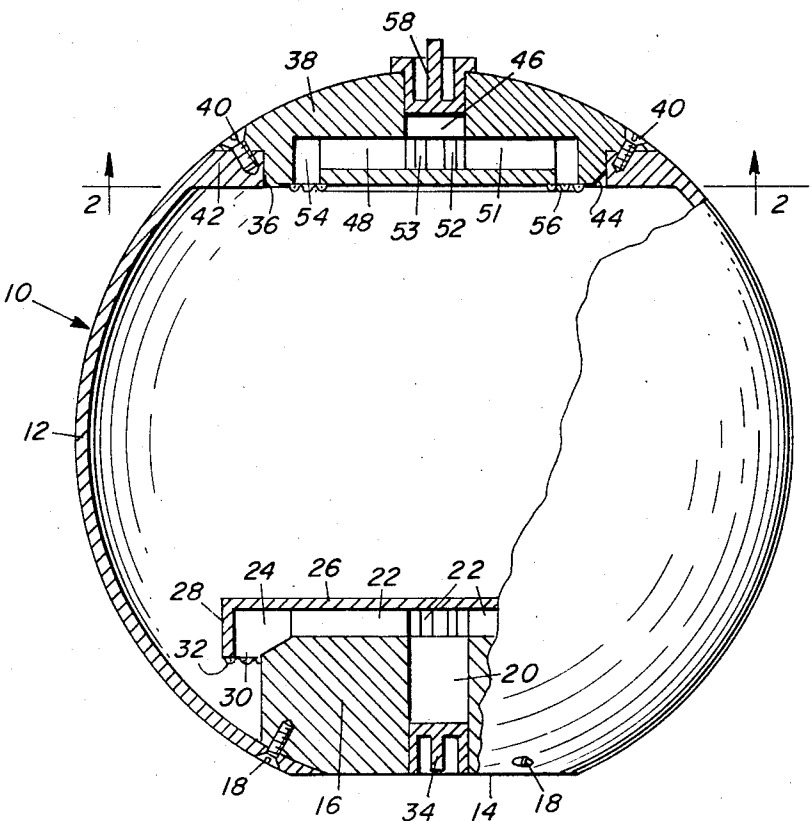


FIG. 1

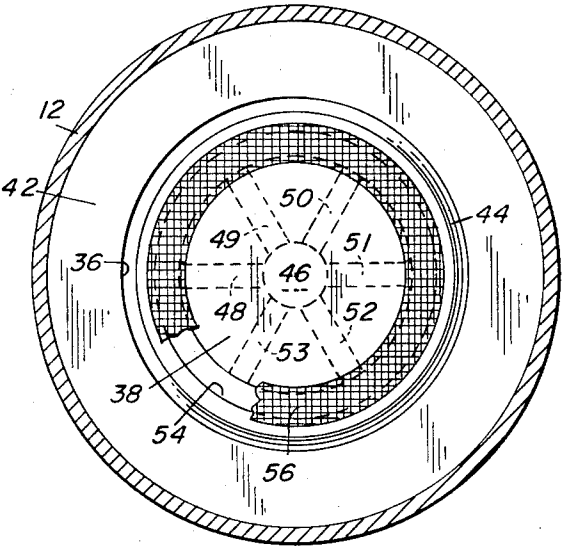


FIG. 2

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## SUBMERSIBLE CREMATORY URN

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates, in general, to urns for holding cremated remains, and more particularly to an urn which is designed for use in burying remains at sea.

For countless years, cremation and interment have been considered to be appropriate forms of memorialization, and in modern times this practice has found increasing acceptance in many countries. Customarily, the cremated remains, which are purified skeletal fragments, are placed in a memorial urn fashioned of bronze, marble, or some other long-lasting material, and the inurned remains are memorialized by placing them in a columbarium, in a cemetery plot, or in some other repository structure, with an appropriate mark to distinguish the location. However, as is becoming more and more evident in densely populated areas, the land required for cemeteries, columbariums, and the like is becoming more and more valuable, with urban growth placing greater pressures on available land. Accordingly, the maintenance of appropriate memorials for an increasing population produces problems not only of land availability but of increasing costs and damage to the ecology that are not easily solved by present methods.

## BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a means for interring, in a simple, inexpensive and dignified way, purified cremated remains.

It is a further object of the invention to provide a means for interring cremated remains whereby the natural elements will be recycled.

It is another object of the invention to provide a crematory urn for receiving cremated remains, the urn being degradable so as to return the urn itself as well as the cremated remains to the natural elements in a relatively brief period of time, as compared to presently used burial devices which are designed specifically to last for a long period of time.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a submersible urn designed to hold cremated remains for burial at sea, thereby eliminating the need for cemeteries, columbariums, and like repository structures.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a submersible urn which is designed to receive cremated remains and, upon burial at sea, to sink to the ocean floor where the urn will dissolve and the natural elements of the remains of the urn will be recycled.

The foregoing and additional objects are accomplished by the present invention through the provision of an urn which is designed to hold cremated remains while the remains are transmitted from the crematory to an ocean site designated for the dignified burial and consequent return to the basic elements both of the remains and of the material of the urn. The urn is provided with a removable closure at the top by means of which the remains may be placed within the container and the container sealed. A capped air vent is provided in the closure, the vent leading by way of one or more air passages to the interior of the container. The bottom of the container preferably is flat to provide stability, with a heavy weight being located at the bottom to insure that the container will sink when placed in the water. A water inlet port is provided through the bottom of the urn, the port having a removable cap and

leading by way of one or more passages into the interior of the container.

After a cremation has taken place, the remains are placed within the container, and the closure positioned to seal the device. The remains may then be transported to a suitable ocean burying site for appropriate burial. However, before the urn is lowered into the water, the caps closing the inlet port and the air vent are removed so that when the device is placed in the water, air will be vented from the interior, it will fill with water and sink to the ocean floor. The materials from which the container are made will degrade by chemical action in the sea water while the remains will be biologically degraded whereby the natural elements will be recycled and the urn and its remains will blend with the surrounding environment. This device thus eliminates the need for using the valuable living space on land that is now required for columbariums, cemeteries or other repository structures, eliminates the attendant requirement for perpetual care, and reduces the disturbance of ecological balance in nature by returning to the elements in a relatively short time that which will ultimately take that same path, but over a very long period of time. This method in no way deters the proper respect due the deceased, for true memorialization is in the memory of the survivors, whereas ordinary and previous methods of interment and storage of remains often served as harsh and unpleasant reminders of the past.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The foregoing and additional objects, features and advantages of the invention will become evident from a consideration of the following detailed description of a preferred embodiment thereof together with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a side elevation view, in partial section of a submersible urn made in accordance with the present invention; and

FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view of the device of the invention taken along line 2—2 of FIG. 1.

## DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Turning now to a consideration of the drawings, there is indicated generally at 10 an urn constructed in accordance with the present invention. As illustrated, the urn is in a spherical form, but it will be apparent that various other configurations may be used, depending upon aesthetic preferences. The urn comprises an outer shell or wall 12 which forms the body of the container and provides it with the required form. The bottom 14 of the container preferably is flat so as to stabilize the device when it is resting on a flat surface. However, it will be apparent that in other configurations it may be desired to place the urn on a suitably shaped pedestal or stand to provide it with the necessary stability, and thus a flat bottom surface is not essential.

Located within the container, and at the bottom thereof, is a ballast 16 which is of sufficient weight to insure that the urn will maintain an upright attitude when placed on the surface of the water and will fill with water and sink. The ballast may be secured in place by any suitable means, as by screws 18 passing through the shell 12 and into the ballast material. Passing through the center of the ballast is an inlet port 20 which leads from the exterior of the container to one or more transverse, radially extending passageways 22

formed in the ballast. The passageways open into an annular chamber 24 which is formed between the ballast 16 and a passage cover 26. As illustrated, the passage cover 26 includes a downwardly extending portion 28 which forms the outer wall of annular chamber 24, the inner wall being a part of the ballast 16 and the space between the inner and outer walls of the chamber forming a downwardly facing opening 30. This opening 30 is covered by a screen 32 to prevent material within the container from escaping into the inlet port. The outer end of port 20 is closed by a removable cap 34 which may take any suitable form, but preferably will have an integral pull tab, handle or the like to facilitate its removal. The cap is flush with the surface of the urn in this embodiment so that the bottom remains flat.

At the top of the container is an opening 36 in the shell through which cremated remains may be placed in the container. Since on the average cremated remains will occupy approximately 175 cubic inches, it will be apparent that the diameter of urn 10 will have to be sufficient to provide the required space, taking into account the losses occasioned by the structure of the urn; a diameter of approximately 8 inches will be adequate. Similarly, the opening 36 must be sufficiently large to receive the fragments which comprise the cremated remains.

A cover or closure 38 fits within the opening 36 and is held tightly in place by suitable fasteners such as screws 40 extending through the cover and into a shoulder portion 42 of the shell, this shoulder portion serving to define the periphery of opening 36. It is noted that the lower surface of the cover 38 may be beveled as at 44 to facilitate location and seating of the cover within the opening 36.

Centrally located within the cover 38 is an air vent 46 which leads from the exterior of the vessel to one or more transverse passageways (see FIG. 2). In the illustrated embodiment, six passageways 48-53 lead radially from vent 46 and open into an annular chamber 54 which is located in cover 38 and which, in turn, opens into the interior of the urn, the arrangement of passages being similar in both the ballast and the cover. The opening between chamber 54 and the interior of the container is covered by means of a suitable screen 56 to prevent material within the container from passing into the vent 46. The outer end of the vent is closed by a suitable cap 58, with caps 34 and 58 being held in their respective places by a friction fit, by threads, or by other suitable means. Preferably, cap 58 is also provided with an integral pull tab or other handle means to facilitate manual removal of the cap from the vent.

It is preferred that the shell 12 of the urn be constructed of a soft aluminum, a bio-degradable plastic, or other similar material that will rapidly dissolve by chemical or biological action upon submersion in salt water. The ballast 16 will preferably be of a ferrous material that will also gradually deteriorate over a period of time. In like manner, the closure 38, the fasteners 18 and 40, and the screens 32 and 56 will be constructed of a suitable material so as also to deteriorate and become a part of the natural elements.

In use, the urn of the present invention serves as a receptacle to convey purified cremated remains from the crematory to a designated oceanic site where final memorialization and burial would take place. Immediately prior to immersion of the device, the funeral director or other agent conducting the burial would re-

move caps 34 and 58 to thus open port 20 and vent 46. When the urn is then placed on the surface of the water, the ballast will hold it in an upright attitude so that water will enter through port 20, passages 22, chamber 24, and through screen 32 into the interior of the vessel. At the same time, air within the urn will escape by way of annular chamber 54, passageways 48-53, and vent 46 to thereby allow the interior to be flooded as the container sinks to the ocean floor. In this manner, the respect of the living for the deceased is paid through the realization that the final interment closely approaches the natural life processes, whereby the elements of the remains and of the burial vessel are returned to the environment to gracefully blend with the elements of nature.

Thus, there has been described a new and novel submersible urn for use in conveying purified cremated remains from a crematory to a designated oceanic site, where burial of the remains may take place. Although the present invention has been described with respect to a specific configuration thereof, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that numerous modifications may be made in the detailed construction thereof without departing from the true spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A submersible urn for underwater burial of cremated remains, comprising:

a container adapted to receive and hold said remains, said container being of a degradable material and having a top portion and a bottom portion; ballast means attached to the bottom portion of said container;

a water entry port in the bottom portion of said container;

removable closure means for said water entry port; an opening in said container through which said remains are placed in said container;

cover means for said opening;

air vent means at the top of said container; and removable closure means for said air vent.

2. The submersible urn of claim 1, wherein said opening is in the top portion of said container, and further including fastener means for securing said cover means to said container.

3. The submersible urn of claim 2, wherein said air vent is located in said cover means.

4. The submersible urn of claim 2, wherein said cover means includes said air vent, the vent extending from the exterior of said container at least part way through said cover, and at least one upper passageway leading from said air vent to the interior of said container, and screen means located in said upper passageway.

5. The submersible urn of claim 4, wherein said water entry port is located in and extends at least part way through said ballast means, the urn further including at least one lower passageway leading from said port to the interior of said container, and screen means located in said lower passageway.

6. The submersible urn of claim 5, wherein said lower passageway is located in said ballast and includes a lower annular chamber surrounding said port, said lower annular chamber including a downwardly facing opening leading into the interior of said container.

7. The submersible urn of claim 6, wherein said upper passageway includes an upper annular chamber

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surrounding said vent and opening downwardly into the interior of said container.

8. The submersible urn of claim 7, wherein each of said removable closure means comprises a manually removable cap.

9. The submersible urn of claim 8, wherein said container is of aluminum which is chemically degradable in the water in which said urn is immersed.

10. The submersible urn of claim 8, wherein said container is of a bio-degradable material.

11. The submersible urn of claim 4, wherein said upper passageway includes an upper annular chamber surrounding said air vent and opening downwardly into the interior of said container.

12. The submersible urn of claim 11, wherein said cover includes a plurality of transverse upper passageways leading from said air vent to said upper annular chamber.

13. The submersible urn of claim 12, wherein said screen means covers the opening of said upper annular chamber into the interior of said container.

14. The submersible urn of claim 13, wherein said water entry port extends from the exterior of said container at least part way through said ballast means; lower chamber means in said ballast means opening downwardly into the interior of said container; and at least one passageway leading from said port to said lower chamber.

15. A submersible urn for underwater burial of cremated remains, comprising:  
a container adapted to receive and hold said remains, said container being of degradable material and having a top portion and a bottom portion;

ballast means attached to the bottom portion of said container;

a water entry port extending from the exterior of said container at least part way through said ballast means, said ballast means including at least one lower passageway leading from said port to the interior of said container;

removable closure means for said water entry port; air vent means at the top of said container; and removable closure means for said vent.

16. The submersible urn of claim 15, further including a screen covering the opening of said lower passageway into the interior of said container.

17. The submersible urn of claim 15, wherein said lower passageway includes a lower annular chamber formed in said ballast means surrounding said port, said lower chamber opening downwardly into the interior of said container.

18. The submersible urn of claim 17, wherein said ballast means includes a plurality of transverse lower passageways leading from said water entry port to said lower annular chamber.

19. The submersible urn of claim 18, further including a screen covering the opening of said lower annular chamber into the interior of said container.

20. The submersible urn of claim 19, further including an opening in said container through which said remains may be placed in the container; cover means for said opening, said cover means including said air vent; screen means covering said air vent; and fastener means for securing said cover means to said container.

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