

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
27 December 2007 (27.12.2007)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2007/149652 A3

(51) International Patent Classification:
F04F 3/00 (2006.01)

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(21) International Application Number:
PCT/US2007/068756

(22) International Filing Date: 11 May 2007 (11.05.2007)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
60/747,020 11 May 2006 (11.05.2006) US

(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every
kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM,
AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH,
CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES,
FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN,
IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR,
LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX,
MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO,
RS, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, SV, SY, TJ, TM,
TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

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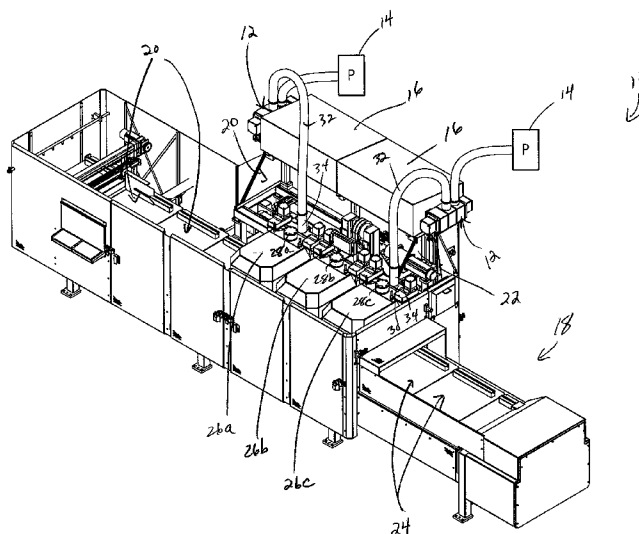
(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every
kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH,
GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM,
ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM),
European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI,
FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MT, NL, PL,
PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM,
GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR EVACUATING A VACUUM CHAMBER



(57) Abstract: A valve arrangement for a vacuum pump assembly selectively opens and closes communication between a vacuum pump, evacuation vessel, and a volume to be evacuated. The valve arrangement allows the evacuation vessel and any conduit connecting the vacuum pump and evacuation vessel to the volume to first be evacuated without providing a vacuum to the volume. The valve arrangement also allows the volume to be connected to the evacuation vessel but cut-off from the vacuum pump so that at initial stages of the evacuation process for the volume dead air contained within the volume may be communicated to the evacuation vessel rather than drawn out by the vacuum pump. Once the dead air, or portions thereof, has been removed from the volume, the valve arrangement may cut-off communication with the evacuation vessel, establish communication between the vacuum pump and the volume, and allow the vacuum pump to provide negative air pressure to the volume so that the volume may be evacuated.



WO 2007/149652 A3



Published:

— *with international search report*

(88) Date of publication of the international search report:

28 August 2008

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US07/68756

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC: **F04F 3/00(2006.01)**

USPC: 137/565.23
 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
 U.S. : 137/565.23

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
x	US 6,446,651 B1 (Abbel) 10 Septmeber 2002 (10.06.2002), column 2, line 53-column 3, line 14.	1-10

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:	Symbol
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"E" earlier application or patent published on or after the international filing date	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	"&" document member of the same patent family
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search 09 April 2008 (09.04.2008)	Date of mailing of the international search report 08 MAY 2008
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Name and mailing address of the ISA/US Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 Facsimile No. (571) 273-3201	Authorized officer Devon Kramer <i>Devon Kramer</i> Telephone No. 571-272-3750 <i>Jay</i>
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US07/68756

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. Claims Nos.: 5
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:
Claim 4 claims the pump is located remote from the volume, whereas claim 5, which depends on claim 4, claims the vessel is proximate the volume. It is unclear how an element is both proximate and remote simultaneously.

3. Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
 2. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fees.
 3. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

 4. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:
- Remark on Protest**
- The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.
 - The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.
 - No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.