CLAIMS

1. A bearing assembly for a pump, said bearing assembly comprising:

a bearing housing configured to support at least one bearing therein, said bearing housing comprising a connection that is configured to form fluid communication between a lubricant supply and said at least one bearing; and

a bearing carrier disposed between said at least one bearing and said bearing housing and rotatably engageable therewith such that selective small-scale rotational adjustment may be made between said bearing carrier and said bearing housing during periods of pump inoperability, while during periods of normal pump operation, said bearing carrier and said bearing housing are in a substantially fixed rotational relationship relative to one another, said bearing carrier defining a channel with a plurality of lubricant passages formed therein such that a lubricant delivered through said connection is placed in fluid communication with said at least one bearing through said channel and at least one of said plurality of lubricant passages irrespective of a relative rotational alignment between said bearing housing and said bearing carrier.

2. The bearing assembly of claim 1, wherein said connection is formed through a substantially radial outward surface of said bearing housing.

3. The bearing assembly of claim 1, wherein said channel defines a substantially circumferential profile about said bearing carrier.

4. The bearing assembly of claim 3, wherein said plurality of lubricant passages are spaced about said circumferential profile defined by said channel.

5. The bearing assembly of claim 4, wherein said plurality of lubricant passages are substantially evenly-spaced about said circumference.

6. The bearing assembly of claim 1, wherein said rotatably engageable disposal between said bearing carrier and said bearing housing is through a threaded fitting therebetween.

7. The bearing assembly of claim 1, wherein said bearing carrier further comprises an adjustment device that permits variable axial spacing of an impeller that defines a fluid-moving portion of said pump.

8. A pump comprising:

a pump housing defining a fluid inlet and a fluid outlet therein;

a pumping mechanism fluidly coupled to said inlet and said outlet and configured to deliver fluid therebetween;

a plurality of bearing members configured to transfer loads from said pumping mechanism to said pump housing; and

a bearing assembly for a pump, said bearing assembly comprising:

a bearing housing configured to support at least one of said plurality of bearings therein, said bearing housing comprising a connection that is configured to form fluid communication between a lubricant supply and said at least one bearing; and

a bearing carrier disposed between said at least one bearing and said bearing housing and rotatably engageable therewith such that selective small-scale rotational adjustment may be made between said bearing carrier and said bearing housing during periods of pump inoperability, while during periods of normal pump operation, said bearing carrier and said bearing housing are in a substantially fixed rotational relationship relative to one another, said bearing carrier defining a channel with a plurality of lubricant passages formed therein such that a lubricant delivered from said lubricant supply through said connection is placed in fluid communication with said at least one bearing through said channel and at least one of said plurality of lubricant passages irrespective of a relative rotational alignment between said bearing housing and said bearing carrier.

9. The pump of claim 8, wherein said pump is a chemical process pump.

10. The pump of claim 8, wherein said connection is formed through generally radial outward surfaces of said bearing housing, and further wherein said channel defines a substantially circumferential profile about said bearing carrier such that upon assembly of said bearing carrier and said bearing housing, said connection is in direct fluid coupling with said channel, and further wherein said plurality of lubricant passages are spaced about said circumferential profile defined by said channel.

11. The pump of claim 10, wherein said plurality of lubricant passages are substantially evenly-spaced about said circumferential profile.

12. The pump of claim 8, further comprising an adjustment device that permits variable axial spacing of said impeller relative to said pump housing.

13. The pump of claim 8, further comprising a sump placed in fluid communication with said at least one bearing such that excess amounts of said lubricant may be conveyed away from said at least one bearing.

14. A method of lubricating a pump bearing, said method comprising introducing a lubricant to said bearing through a bearing assembly, said bearing assembly comprising:

a bearing housing configured to support said bearing therein, said bearing housing comprising a connection that is configured to form fluid communication between a lubricant supply and said bearing; and

a bearing carrier disposed between said bearing and said bearing housing and rotatably engageable therewith such that selective small-scale rotational adjustment may be made between said bearing carrier and said bearing housing during periods of pump inoperability, while during periods of normal pump operation, said bearing carrier and said bearing housing are in a substantially fixed rotational relationship relative to one another, said bearing carrier defining a channel with a plurality of lubricant passages formed therein such that upon receipt of said lubricant from said lubricant supply through said connection, said lubricant is delivered to said bearing through said channel and at least one of said plurality of lubricant passages irrespective of a relative

rotational alignment between said bearing housing and said bearing carrier.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein said pump is a centrifugal pump.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein said pump is a chemical process pump.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein said introducing a lubricant takes place after said bearing carrier has been rotated relative to said pump such that bearing access to said lubricant after said rotation is substantially uninhibited relative to bearing access to said lubricant prior to said rotation.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein no realignment of said bearing carrier relative to said bearing housing is performed in order to retain said substantially uninhibited access of said lubricant to said bearing through said connection, said channel and said plurality of lubricant passages.

19. The method of claim 14, further comprising adjusting a spacing between a pump impeller and a pump housing such that bearing access to said lubricant after said adjustment is substantially unchanged relative to bearing access to said lubricant prior to said adjustment, said adjustment taking place without need for disassembling said bearing assembly.

20. The method of claim 14, further comprising draining any excess buildup of said lubricant that occurs adjacent said bearing to an oil sump, said draining taking place irrespective of a rotational orientation of said bearing carrier to said bearing housing.