

[<Back](#)


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Under the sea, I'd like to be.



<mailto:%20ahoymatey@rocketmail.com>

Brenda Schultheis

It may be a subject of great morbidity, but it's inevitable for all organic creatures. We're all going to pass into another dimension through death and, however you want to look at it, accept it and be done.

There was a recent article published by the Orlando Sentinel on having your bodily ashes mixed with concrete and placed in final rest on the bottom of the ocean floor. Eternal Reefs, Inc. is the original brainchild of Carleton Glen Palmer — although he most likely didn't realize it. He requested of his son-in-law, who makes artificial reef for a living, include his ashes in the concrete for the manufactured reef balls and laid to rest on the ocean floor, "where there are plenty of red snapper and grouper." Now Eternal Reefs, his son-in-law's new company based out of Decatur, Ga., is busy making reef balls — concrete balls made with a special concrete and the ashes of the dearly departed, with holes throughout the ball, that provides a home for countless reef fish and corals.

Eternal Reefs can be located on the Internet at www.eternalreefs.com and states their purpose is "to provide an environmentally sound alternative to memorialize cremated remains." The site further states that "by integrating cremated remains into artificial reefs in various oceans and seas around the world, we seek to provide permanent living memorials that are positive for our environment and cost effective for the consumer." The ultimate in recycling, for as much as \$3,200 or as little as \$850, you can become part of the sea-floor landscape in one of four types of artificial reef: the Atlantis, Nautilus, Aquarius or Community Reef. You can also purchase additional certificates for the family as a memorial reminder.

Once you deliver the cremated remains of your loved ones

Point Click Review

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(they don't do cremations), Eternal Reefs will take care of the rest, providing a GPS survey to record the latitude and longitude of your Memorial Reef as well as attaching a bronze plaque to the reef with the family name. The reefs last over 500 years, and there are already 100,000 of the reef balls deployed in various marine sanctuaries and diving and fishing areas. They have been documented to withstand hurricanes and other undersea turmoil with no damage or movement, so your relatives won't be suddenly moved to another neighborhood.

Rather than be buried in a field with a whole bunch of other dead people around me, and the eventual threat of having to relocate for some high-rise apartment building (although I wouldn't have to pack much), I think cremation and burial at sea in a concrete reef ball sounds fine. For all the disservice I've done to lobsters and oysters over the years, it would be a fitting end.

You can reach Eternal Reefs at Eternal Reefs, Inc., P.O. Box 2473 Decatur, Ga. 30031 or call toll-free (888) 423-7333, www.eternalreefs.com.

Brenda Schultheis is a columnist and graphic artist at the Star-Banner, who hopes her daughter takes up scuba diving someday so that she can dive by and say hi every couple of years or so. Contact her via ahoymatey@rocketmail.com or call 867-4110.

[<Back](#)

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