

donate blood for others

filled in the inevitable bureaucratic forms.

The first step in the blood donor process is having one's blood tested, the most painful part. I am told: for they prick you in the finger. (Can you imagine some girl in nurse's school for three years or so, learning how to prick people's fingers?)

Then they take some of the blood that trickles out and slosh it around on a ceramic plate for some strange reason. As near as I can figure, the color it turns on the plate tells that blood technician who's doing the sloshing what blood type you are (A, AB, B, O, or 4-F, I guess.)

I was really "dying" to give blood. Unfortunately, however, they do not accept anybody with a runny nose, and so I was left out in the "cold". All my efforts were in "vein". I knew no one would believe me, and that I'd get "needled" all day. But they really would not let me make a deposit into the blood bank. (I was willing to do it just for "interest's" sake.)

So what did I do? I excused myself from classes all day long, and hung around the clinic, picking up any little observations that I could. For instance, I heard the nurse say confidentially to Mike "Snowbear" Jenken, just as she was about to stick the needle in his arm, "I hope I have better luck with you. I blew the last one." Tom Hicks, over on the other bed, went ashen.

People differed as to whether it's a pleasant sensation, but no one I spoke to said it was terribly painful. (that's comforting.) A few felt faint afterwards, and it was the general opinion that it did leave one a little weak. The vein drain, you see, works by this needle, about two inches long and about as thick around as a knitting needle, just below the inside of your elbow. The blood, under pressure only from your heart (no external pumps, I mean), is forced out the needle, through a tube, and into the one-pint plastic pouch. The process takes from five to 15 minutes, depending on the person. I guess if you have high blood pressure, it comes out faster.

Then on to the free pop and doughnuts. The Red Cross folks working there handed stuff out like there was no tomorrow. Beatrice Levesque must have taken at least a dozen Cokes — and she's too young to have given blood even if she had wanted to! There was plenty for the asking though: even after all the schools had been through, some pop and doughnuts remained.

I suppose all those who gave blood deserve credit for this sacrifice for others. All the other schools that helped out showed community spirit, and I think they deserve thanks, too.

I'm still disappointed that they wouldn't take my blood. Do you think that maybe the real reason was the little "Do not open until Christmas" sign I had on my arm? Or was there something Wrong with my blood? Somebody told me I have green

stripes on my white corpuscles. Is that any reason not to take my blood? If they can find a receiver who'll stomach (somehow that word doesn't fit) John Jonker's blood, couldn't they locate an artery for me? There should be a public outcry over this. I ought to have written an Instant Editorial no? Oh, well, it's too late to do anything about it now.

The Word of the Week is centripetal.

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