

Firm banks on plasma

By SHAUN BRINK
For the Emerald

Commercial plasma banks have come out of the closets and into the money, and the move has led to a flood of eager sellers and a stream of critics.

"Plasma banks have a bad reputation," says Alan Wickizer, director of the Eugene Plasma Corporation. "But just because there is money involved it doesn't mean we are getting a lot of burns or we don't care about the individual."

A skid row image of blood banks prompted the FDA to investigate charges that transfusions from paid donors carried a greater risk of viral hepatitis. The investigation culminated last May in an FDA ruling requiring that all blood and blood components be marked by source, either a paid or volunteer donor.

Despite the ruling, some medical authorities, including the volunteer American Association of blood banks, express doubts about the commercial banks.

But those doubts are unwarranted, Wickizer says. "We are extremely careful," he explains. "We send a sample of every plasma to be checked for hepatitis." In addition, he says, all clients must fill out a lengthy questionnaire and be screened by the staff doctor.

The center rejects anyone who has had hepatitis or has been pregnant in the last six months. A

current illness, a low protein count or body weight also temporarily prevent a person from selling plasma.

"Our concern is for the donor as well," the director says. "If they are not healthy, we won't let them donate."

EPC's parent corporation, North American Biologics Inc. of Miami, showed similar caution when it selected Eugene for one of its new centers. The neighborhood — the downtown mall, the library and the University — will, EPC predicts, help eradicate the skid row image.

"Fortunately we have few deterrents," Wickizer says. "We do have several husband and wife teams saving for a trip." Other "plasma sellers" include teachers, students, a father saving money for his second child's birth and a fraternity raising money to help an injured member.

Clients earn \$10 for a pint of plasma and can make up to \$100 a month. The money attracts people who normally wouldn't donate blood, Wickizer says. "After all, you can't buy books on blood bank credit," he adds.

"If we do get any of Lane Memorial Blood Bank's regular donors we encourage them to stay there," the director says, stressing EPC was not in competition with the volunteer blood bank.

Scott Wright, administrator for the Lane Memorial Blood Bank, also expressed a desire to avoid a competitive situation. "I don't want

to have a nit-picking situation like there is in Seattle. Nothing is going to gain from it."

Wright has some personal reservations about commercial plasma banks, but adds "They (EPC) are here."

The volunteer bank's medical director, Dr. Jacqueline Miller also says she has "a slight feeling of uneasiness" about commercial blood banks in general. There has been concern, she adds, that frequent plasma donations would cause a decrease in plasma proteins. However, the studies are inconclusive, she says.

Miller, who also heads the Pacific Region Accreditation Board for blood banks, does agree with Wickizer on one point: The plasma is needed. "Most volunteer blood banks separate plasma on a large scale," Miller says, "but by no means can they provide it all." Commercial banks, like EPC, are increasingly and profitably filling in that gap.

Both banks sell plasma to drug firms which break it down into gamma globulin, cryoprecipitate (for hemophiliacs), fibrogen (for clotting), and serum albumin (for burn victims).

EPC stresses this side of the plasma business, as well as its efforts to provide professional and attractive surroundings for the "donors." The efforts are, literally, paying off.

When EPC opened its doors in July, people crowded in to sell their plasma to the grateful living

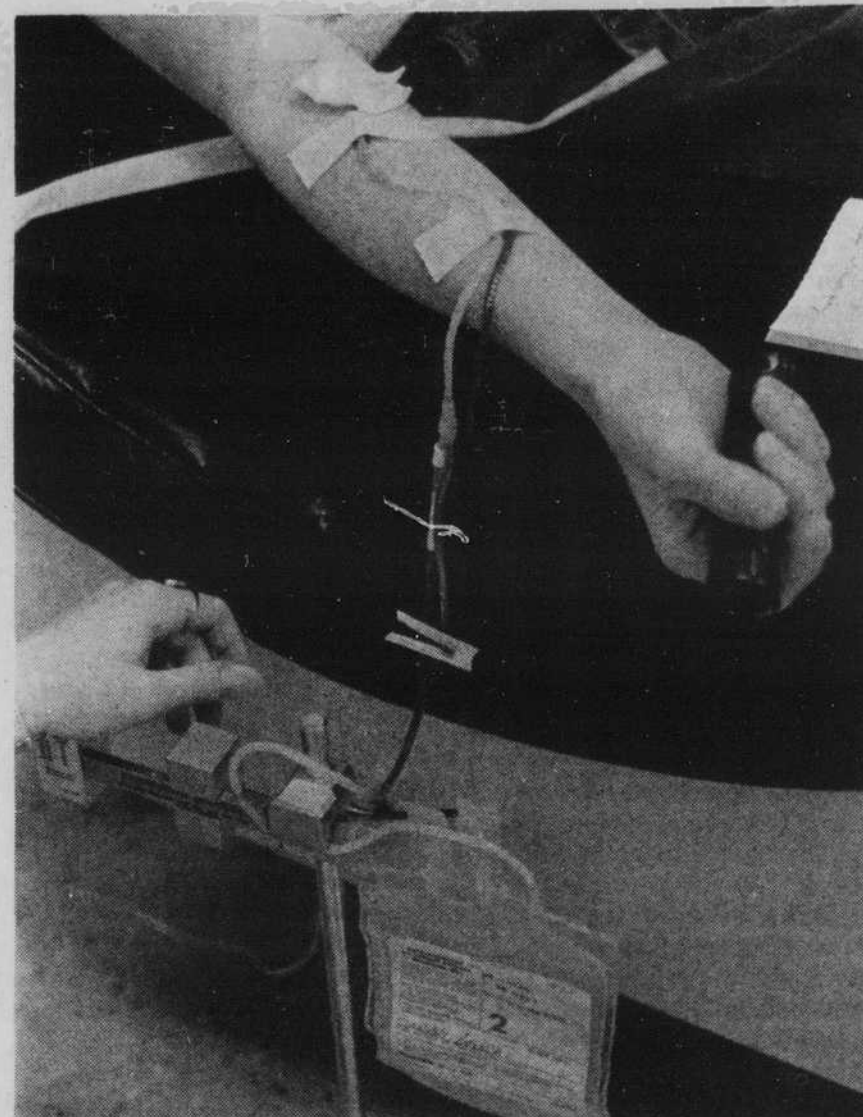


Photo by Greg Gawlowski

Plasma donation is a new and profitable way for Eugene area residents to spend their free time. One can make up to \$100 a month, and some people use this to save for special occasions.

in order to buy tickets to see the Grateful Dead. By the middle of October, over 1,200 people had sold their plasma to EPC. Many have become regular, satisfied donors.

"This is sure not like the one in

San Francisco — that's one depressing place," said a 24-year-old man. "The people here are skilled. It's a bright, cheerful place."

And that's the image the center plans to maintain.

Music school to toot horn over new facility

By DOUG McRAE
For the Emerald

The first addition to what is now Beall Hall was a surplus Army barracks in 1921. This weekend, the music school will dedicate its latest addition in a three-day celebration that coincides with homecoming activities.

University Pres. William Boyd says the new structures are a part of the music school's "quantum leap forward" from its first facilities, which he described as

New practice, classroom space added

"near slum conditions."

The \$2.07 million north and east wings add needed practice and classroom space, as well as offices and storage lockers, to the school's previously cramped facilities.

Morrette Rider, music school dean, says use of the structures marks the start of a new era for the school, and the future addition of

faculty members and equipment should enable the school to reach its long-range goals.

Requests for funding the construction were submitted to the Legislature as early as 1963, but it took 12 years for the music school's proposals to reach a high enough priority on the list of funding requests from the state's higher education system, says Rider.

The \$2.07 million appropriation covered construction costs of the new wings and remodeling in the old middle and south buildings, says Rider. Construction began in 1976 and was completed last summer, Rider adds.

In the dozen years between the

first submission of construction funding requests and the final appropriation, the school used its best lobbying tool, says Royce Saltzman, associate dean at the school.

"Our lobbying was done through music," he says. "By playing at Senate banquets and legislative dinners, we told them what the school was about."

During that time, however, the school ran into serious problems as a result of overcrowding.

Conditions were so bad, says Saltzman, that "we had kids practicing in closets and halls because of the lack of practice rooms. There was also a lack of classrooms."

Rider says scheduling the school's inadequate facilities often forced students to rehearse late at night. "It was not uncommon to find organ students practicing at three or four in the morning," Rider adds.

Last year the school had over 425 music majors taking classes and practicing in facilities designed for 200 students, officials say.

"As evidence to the overcrowding last year, the newest facilities are in almost 100 percent use now," says Stephen Stone, assistant to the dean.

There are now 451 music majors enrolled, says Rider, and officials estimate that as many as 1,000 other students from the University take classes there.

While space is a major consideration in serving such large number of students, another factor is unique to the music school. "The biggest problem is acoustics," says Rider. "We make a lot of noise."

"Some buildings had good isolation, but some of these buildings are 50 years old and the sound was horrendous," Saltzman says.

The solution of the noise problem was to "build a building within a building," says Rider, adding that the result is that sound is so well isolated in the new wings that students "cannot hear people in the next room."

This type of construction leads to higher costs, says Rider. Boyd points out that the school got "more for their money than most universities are getting."

Rider says occupation of the new wings has not only helped improve the school's programs, but has also "made quite a difference to faculty and students both. There is a lot of pride."

Rider estimates between 500 and 600 persons will attend the official dedication Saturday morning in Beall concert hall.

Wednesday, October 25, 1978

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