

# Calling healthy people: Blood drive donors needed

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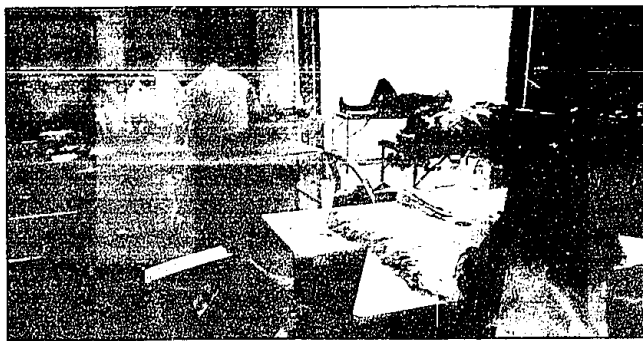
It's tough to get healthy people age 17 or older to donate their blood to the American Red Cross. It's getting tougher to find healthy people in the first place.

A nationwide flu epidemic is making it virtually impossible for the Red Cross to keep adequate blood supplies, said Red Cross spokesperson Diane Risko, during Thursday's semi-annual blood drive at Farmington Hills Fire Station No. 5.

Adding extremely cold temperatures into the equation, one would almost have expected fewer participants at the Station No. 5. But, after a slow start, an afternoon rush pumped up numbers enough to actually exceed the most-recent event in Aug. 1999.

There were 162 pints collected Thursday, enough to serve 486 people, according to Red Cross officials, explaining that each pint helps three people. That total was up slightly from August, when 154 pints were collected. It was almost the identical total of the Jan. 1999 event, when the total was 163 pints.

"The flu?" said Farmington resident Risko, repeating a ques-



Picking up: In the late afternoon, there was a lull at the semi-annual blood drive at the Farmington Hills Station No. 5. After work, though, business picked up.

**"But we're hanging on by a thread. We have less than a full day's supply" and require the importation of 200 pints of blood a day.**

**Diane Risko**  
—Red Cross spokeswoman

tion. "That's big-time bad news. Twenty-seven of 36 regions in the U.S. are in a national emergency appeal for blood because of the flu."

The good news: Not here. "But we're hanging on by a thread," Risko said, about the metro Detroit region. "We have less than a full day's supply" and require the importation of 200 pints of blood a day.

Risko explained that, in general, "People aren't showing up to donate," or are being turned away by nurses at the donor site. At a recent drive, 18 of 85 scheduled donors canceled because of the flu, she added.

"On top of that, December and January historically are low (months) for laboratories. The supply is always low for the holidays," Risko said.

Thursday's morning shift saw 71 donors, with 91 coming in later. During a slow part of the day, Joanne Lindquist of the Red

Cross was staying optimistic that the drive would pick up — as it did. Lindquist, regional representative for the Southeastern Michigan Blood Services Region, coordinates 12 daily blood drives in the area.

"We'll try to keep that momentum (from past drives) going," Lindquist said.

One reason for any momentum at all is Melissa Garr's involvement. In a freakish incident in July 1997, teenager Melissa was critically injured outside a Farmington pool when a heavy tree branch fell and knocked her unconscious. Melissa later credited the availability of blood for playing a large role in saving her life, and now she is active in promoting the Hills blood drives. Her father is Lt. Mike Garr of the Farmington Hills Fire Department.

On Sept. 2, 1997, while Melissa remained hospitalized and was battling to come out of a



Getting ready: Red Cross volunteer Carolyn Spangenberg checks in donor Maria Gilligan, while daughter Amanda Gilligan waits.

coma, a record 184 pints were collected.

Numbers for the Hills blood drives continue to far exceed pre-1997 events, Risko said. Only 25 donors each event was the norm until Melissa's accident raised the bar of awareness; an average



One more thing... Red Cross nurse Tricia Frazzini R.N., asks a few final questions of blood donor Dick Latimer.

of 133 pints has been generated since. Even so, the numbers can be improved.

"Only 5 percent of eligible people donate," Risko said. "And 70 percent will need blood sometime in their life."

Risko stressed that each donation of blood can have three lives, with blood divided into three components: red blood cells, plasma and platelets, which she describes as "the gold."

Platelets only have a five-day "shelf life," said Risko. She

added that 10 donors are needed for enough platelets to give one transfusion to a cancer patient.

Lindquist said two other Red Cross blood drives are being hosted in Farmington Hills. Those are as follows:

■ 2-8 p.m. Monday, Jan. 31, at Forest Park Baptist Church, 26806 Farmington Road, call 248-476-0080 for information.

■ 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 13, at Oakland Community College-Orchard Ridge Campus, call 313-257-7756 for information.



Preparation: Volunteers Marion Brewer and Joann Cline assemble blood collection bags.

## Studying the past Hills woman named editor of Jewish history journal

BY JONI HUBBARD  
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The charm of history and its enigmatic lesson consist in the fact that, from age to age, nothing changes and yet everything is completely different. Aldous Huxley

Aimee Ergas doesn't live in the past, but she loves to study it.

"I'm a history buff in many ways," said Ergas, who was named editor of the quarterly journal, *Michigan Jewish History* last year. "But the Jewish aspect of it, I don't know as much. I've learned a lot."

The Farmington Hills resident moved into her new position quite naturally, having written articles for the journal. The former editor, a family friend, decided to leave and asked Ergas to consider taking the job. It seemed like a perfect fit for the busy mother of three children.

"It's a flexible kind of job," she explained. "I have really committed myself to being there for my kids. I could work at home, plus just the content I find fascinating."

Published by the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, the journal has begun its 39th year of chronicling the history of the state's Jewish population. It serves a much different purpose than other publications geared toward a similar audience.

"We try not to do any of the current events, because that's really not our mission," Ergas said. "This gives a good overview of the importance of some of the individuals in our communities and how they've participated in historic events."

**Ergas has been particularly impressed by learning how many Jewish people have played an instrumental role in American history and world events.**

She has been particularly fascinated with the pioneering aspects of Jewish history and how populations have located throughout the state. A map in the Fall, 1999 issue shows more than 40 communities, spread throughout Michigan from Trenton into the Upper Peninsula.

"That whole pioneer story is just so fascinating," Ergas said. "I was amazed when I saw (the map). It's a widespread population, and it's melded into communities everywhere from rural to urban areas."

The challenge has been to bring those communities together, a challenge the *Journal and Jewish Historical Society of Michigan* continually strive to meet. While there is a greater concentration of Jewish communities in southern Michigan, the publication includes a wide variety of articles.

Ergas has been particularly impressed by learning how many Jewish people have played an instrumental role in American history and world events. She ticks off the names from memory: Isadore Levin, one of the Americans sent to France for the peace conference after World War I; Philip Slo-movitz, a journalist and editor, who was very influential



Aimee Ergas, editor

in politics and U.S. relations with Israel and Palestine; Max Fisher, a veteran Jewish activist.

As a publication of the Historical Society, the journal serves as an archive for those stories. The Society has received a grant to set up a website to put the publication on-line.

"That's really exciting," Ergas said. "We want to create a 40-year index, to make it more accessible to people."

The Society is allied with many area archives, like the Jewish Federation's, with the goal of providing the broadest possible range of information. But Ergas is quick to point out Jewish history is only part of a larger history of this area.

"We participate with programs at the Detroit Historical Museum, and we're part of the Detroit 300 celebration," she said. "The whole community is made up of smaller communities. We're just one of them."

For more information about the *Journal* or the Society, call (248) 661-7708 or (248) 661-1000.

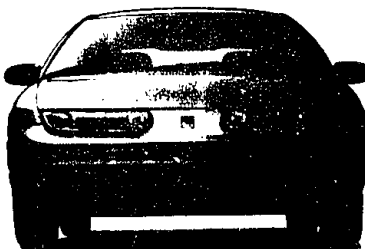
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