

Students make fast money by donating plasma

Cash provides incentive to give blood at Bryan plasma center

By James A. Johnson
Of The Battalion Staff

A blood bank may not strike you as a place where you would find dozens of smiling college students waiting eagerly in a crowded lobby. But if that wait means more spending money, many students are likely to find it worthwhile.

Westgate Plasma Center, located at Westgate Plaza on Wellborn Road, has been in business for less than seven months and already is a popular pit stop for students seeking a financial uplift.

CPM Industries of New York gives the Center half a million dollars each year, which is dispensed to donors and the Center's 21 employees. The Center draws an average of 550 donors every week.

For college students, the most alluring aspect of the Plasma Center is the opportunity to make fast money.

A person can donate plasma up to eight times each month and can donate twice weekly if visits are scheduled at least 48 hours apart.

Donors earn \$5 for their first, third, fifth and seventh visits, and \$12 for the second, fourth, sixth and eighth visits. Bonuses of \$5 are given for first, fourth and sixth visits while an eighth visit earns the donor a \$10 bonus.

Jorge Trevino, manager of the Plasma Center, said that even though people rarely are denied the chance to donate plasma, there are several requirements the donor must meet. The amount of plasma which can be donated is based on the donor's height, weight, sex and hematocrite (ratio between plasma and red cells in a person's blood).

The potential donor must also pass a thorough physical examination. Donors must be at least 18 years old, weigh more than 110 pounds, have a pulse of between 50 to 100 beats per minute and must never have had hepatitis.

The Center also requires donors to present two forms of identification. All testing and requirements are standards set by the Food and Drug Administration, Trevino said.

"They (FDA) could turn the Center down if we didn't abide by their laws," Trevino added. "We can never sacrifice the quality of a product made from a donor's plasma. People's lives depend on this safety."

The most common reasons people are not allowed to donate concern high or low blood pressure and various infections brought on by such popular practices as ear piercing and tattooing using contaminated instruments.

The method of taking someone's plasma is known as plasmapheresis. In this method, the plasma is separated from red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. About 600 milliliters (a little more than a pint)

of plasma is separated from the red cells in a refrigerated centrifuge. Then, only the donor's red cells are returned to him.

Trevino said there is never more than the equivalent of two pints of blood drawn from a donor during each visit.

Trevino said it takes 30 to 40 minutes to give plasma. He added that it is a profitable, virtually painless way for donors to help people with deficiencies in their blood.

Trevino said a donor's healthy plasma is useful as a treatment for victims of hemophilia (free-bleeders).

"Healthy people make the best donors," Trevino explained.

Desperate situations sometimes have lured students to the Center. Trevino recalled one new donor feeling light-headed after giving plasma. Because she had only a small amount of plasma taken, the staff suspected there was more to the situation.

"She admitted she hadn't eaten since 3 o'clock the day before," Trevino said. "She may not have had enough money to buy food."

One girl wanted to donate but couldn't because she had an enlarged spleen. Although she seemed to be in desperate financial need, the Center had no alternative to turn her away because of FDA health requirements.

Another person became dizzy after donating. Because he was a regular donor, the staff didn't understand why his reaction suddenly changed. Eventually he admitted that he had not eaten in 24 hours and that he had stayed up all night studying for an exam.

Trevino said the only possible harm in the process could come if a

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— Missy Hickman, Plasma donor

donor is accidentally injected in a place other than a vein, but even then, only a minor bruise could result.

However, Trevino added that if a staff member gets a donor's blood type confused with another donor's and replaces red cells of the wrong blood type, the result could be fatal. But Trevino said that has never occurred at his facility. Chances of it happening are only one in 100,000, he estimated.

If donors feel nauseated or faint, they are given orange juice. But Trevino said fainting isn't common.



Trent Havard, a junior business major from Houston, reacts as phlebotomist Terri Surber adjusts a needle to draw blood. Havard,

a regular customer to the Plasma Center, uses the money to help pay bills.

Photo by Jay Jansen

After donors have given plasma, they are advised to drink plenty of water.

"Don't drink any caffeine drinks because you'll use the restroom, and the idea is to retain fluids," Trevino said.

The waiting room of the Plasma Center is usually occupied by at least a dozen students, he said.

Because the Center maintains such a relaxed setting, students often bring books to read before and during the donation. Although worried expressions usually are seen in a medical facility, they are not evident at the Center.

Missy Hickman, a sophomore premed major from Tyler, views her donation as a prudent financial decision.

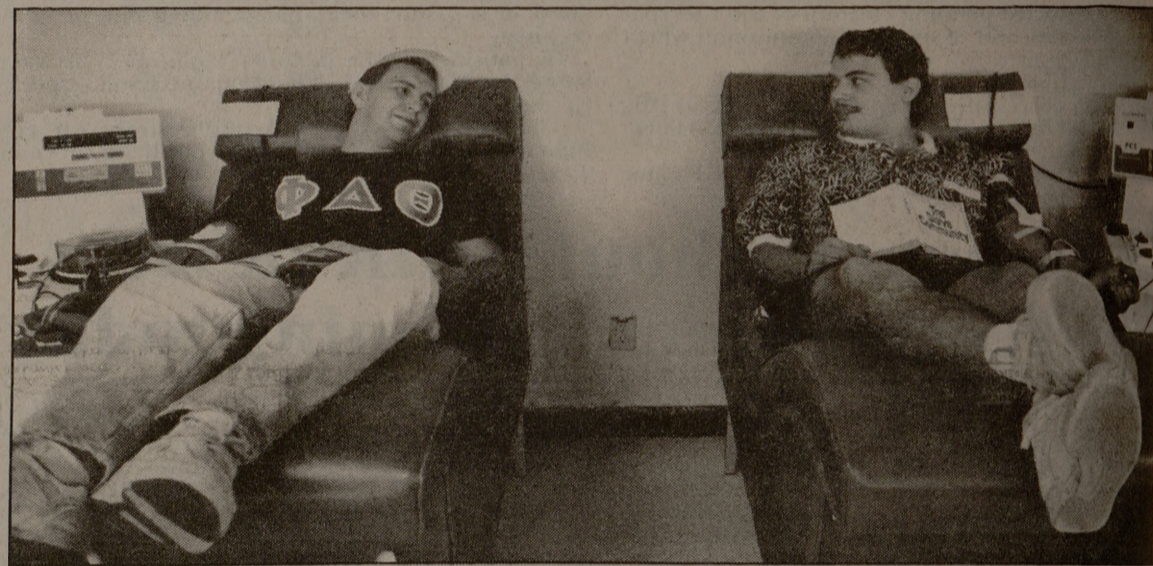
"If they want to stick me and give me money, that's fine," Hickman said, laughing. "It's my ninth time to donate in six weeks and it's great for spending money."

Hickman has earned more than \$100 and finds it rather surprising that she can do so while sitting patiently through the entire process.

"It's in a very laid back environment," she said.

Marcus Royalty, a junior engineering technology major from Lake Jackson, echoed Hickman's sentiments.

"It's good pay and it's not inconve-



Pete Mora, a freshman general studies student from Corpus Christi, and Emilio Lara, a sopho-

more genetics major from Pharr, pass time while giving plasma. The process takes about an hour

Photo by Jay Jansen

minent," Royalty said.

Royalty has sufficient reason to feel the way he does. He has visited the Center 16 times over a two-month period and made more than

\$100 during the summer alone.

"It helps me pay for gas and other little things like ice cream and shopping," he said. "It's worth the few

minutes it takes."

Royalty offers some advice to future donors: "It's best to come in the morning when it (the Center) is busy."

Smothers Brothers' show sparks laughs

By Todd Stone

Of The Battalion Staff

The Smothers Brothers created a unique and entertaining show Sunday afternoon in Rudder Auditorium with the help of the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra.

The brothers opened with "Boil That Cabbage Down" with Tom Smothers on guitar and Dick Smothers on upright bass. Naturally, they didn't finish the song because Tom didn't respond when Dick said, "Take it," during the duet.

An argument followed, and the comedy flowed from the clever dialogue between the brothers:

Dick: "Why didn't you take it?"

Tom: "That's not what I heard you say."

Dick: "What did you think I said?"

Tom: "Naked bacon." Dick glared.

Tom: "It didn't make any sense to me either."

The same format continued. They would begin a song, Tom would do something weird and an argument would follow. After destroying the ballad "Cuando Caliente El Sol," Tom spoke in Spanish to his silent brother:

Tom: "¿Que pasa? ¿El gato tiene el tongueo?"

Dick: "You don't understand what that means. It was written for you."

Tom: "El torro crapo."

When beginning "The Impossible Dream," Tom said, "We would like to dedicate this song to the Dallas Cowboys."

In the middle of the ballad "Poor Wandering One," Tom performed a musical duel with the piano player and music director, Michael Preddy. Tom would play a guitar lick, and Preddy would repeat the notes on piano. However, Tom became juvenile, and the two ended up playing

one note at a vigorous pace which became the theme to the "Batman" television series.

During "Just Say Yo," Tom performed a variety of yo-yo tricks while Dick sang and joked with the audience.

Tom later satirized TV evangelism: "Give me an amen! Give me a hallelujah! Now give me some money."

The brothers were pros onstage, and their dialogue and music were well timed. Dick displayed excellent harmony and found humor in his role as "straight man," and Tom was hilarious with his off-beat mannerisms and explanations:

Dick: "What would we be without that great (American) flag?"

Tom: "Mexicans?"

Dick: "That was a rhetorical question."

Tom: "It was a hypothetical answer."

Besides accompanying the Smothers Brothers, the Brazos Valley Orchestra opened the program with a variety of well-known classics. The orchestra began with "The Star Spangled Banner" and played selections from "The Phantom of the Opera."

Conductor Franz Anton Krager must have wanted an emotional response from the audience as "Olympic Fanfare and Theme" and "The Raiders' March" ("Raiders of the Lost Ark") were included in the program.

The orchestra also performed pieces from "The Wizard of Oz" to celebrate its 50th anniversary. All the music was performed with flare.

Overall, the Smothers Brothers' show was filled with great music and a bunch of laughs. I wouldn't have missed the University of Houston-A&M game for them, but they were still entertaining.



Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

Tom and Dick Smothers perform "The Impossible Dream" with the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra in Rudder Auditorium.

Bryan recording studio helps launch local bands

By John Righter

Of The Battalion Staff

Kevin Bomar, owner of Airplay Studios, is determined to play every demo tape and to demonstrate every device in the 16-track recording studio inside his Bryan home. Two and a half hours after the interview began, Bomar is just warming up.

"You can't leave without listening to the Subculture demo," he insists while running behind his console to a reel-to-reel player. "You've got to hear this. This is a Subculture you've never heard live."

Bomar gives an easy interview. Just sit him down and mention production or local music, and the man will take care of the rest.

"There are so many good bands in College Station," he said. "Unfortunately, the support is bad because no one stays in this town long enough to follow a group. They go to school, party, and then go their separate ways. There is no chance for a cult following like in Dallas or Austin."

Eighteen years ago Bomar got his start in music by playing in a high school band in Dallas. From there he moved on to session (freelance) work, and writing and performing jingles. It was during his time as a Dallas session player that he became interested in production.

"I worked for a booking agency, but it was real sporadic in the '70s," he said. "Fortunately, I got to work with some quality engineers who took me behind the console, where I picked up the basics of engineering."

A near-fatal bout with a ruptured appendix in 1981 brought him to College Station for medical help, drawing him out of the regular Dallas session work and leaving him in a huge financial hole.

Bomar decided to stay in College Station, first venturing into promotion (George Strait and Joe "King" Carrasco) and then into production.

During the past eight years Bomar has expanded Airplay Studios from a \$7,500 unit with an eight-track recorder to a \$35,000 system that has been upgraded to a 16 track.

The studio, which takes up half of Bomar's home, is his own creation and the product of many hours of work, witnessed by the day job Bomar keeps in addition to producing.

"Engineering in the studio is not just pushing buttons, changing faders and hitting the recorder," Bomar explains. "There's a lot of things that go into it."

"You have to plan the outcome of a sound. You need to sit down and plan the production with the band and find out what sound they are after and how you can help them achieve it in the clearest and cheapest way."

Being an accomplished musician also doesn't hurt. Bomar's range of instruments includes bass, drums, guitars, violin, harmonica, keyboards and a special new addition in the form of a \$1400 Casio FZ-1 sampler/modulator that allows him to reproduce 100 different musical arrangements in clear stereo sound.

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