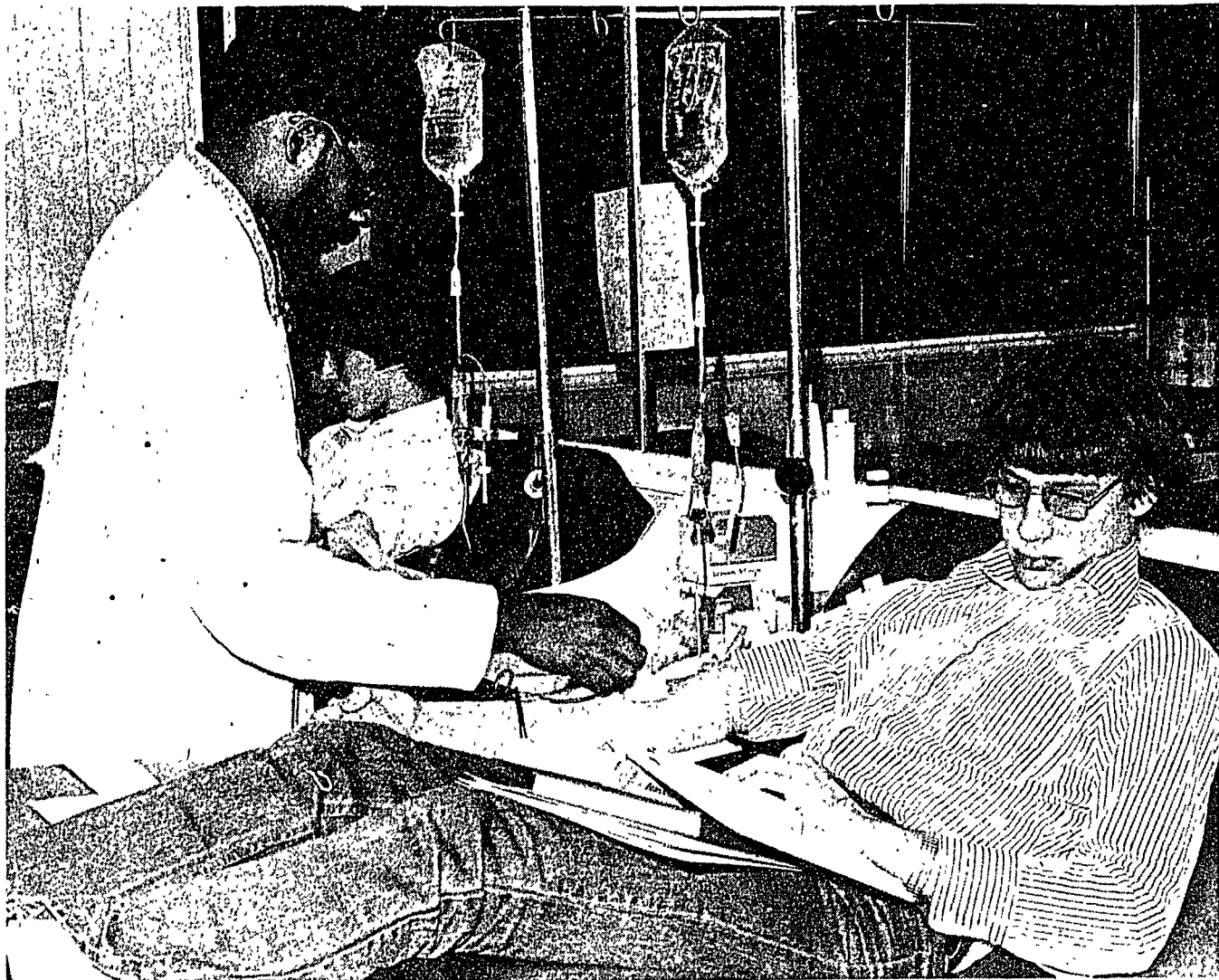


# Donors, patients profit by Sera-Tec blood business



Sera-Tec donor John Irwin (6th-Engineering Sciences) gets his arm checked.

Photo by Craig Houtz

By JUDY MESKO  
Collegian Staff Writer

Losing blood usually is associated with death, but sacrificing small quantities of blood actually can help save lives and earn income for blood donors.

Blood plasma, the particularly useful liquid portion of blood, is collected at Sera-Tec Biologicals, Inc., Allen St., by a process called plasmapheresis.

In addition to providing necessary plasma for life saving products and research, Sera-Tec pays its donors.

Plasmapheresis takes about an hour of the donor's time. Two pints of whole blood are removed from the donor. The blood is centrifuged, separating the plasma from the red and white cells and platelets, or blood parts associated with clotting, which are infused into the donor along with a saline solution.

Sera-Tec donor David Reutschlin (12-journalism) said there is a common joke among donors that the solution gives some donors a sexual reaction called a "saline rush."

Dr. James Crispen, medical director for Sera-Tec's home office in Harrisburg, however, said this was only psychological. The saline solution feels cooler than blood, but it does not contain an aphrodisiac, he said.

For every two pints of blood removed from the donor, one pint of plasma is retained and one pint of the other components is infused into the donor. The plasma is then frozen and sent to pharmaceutical companies for processing.

The following products are derived from plasma and are used as injections:

- Hyper immune gamaglobulin, used to treat and prevent Rh disease, rabies, and tetanus.
- Albumin, used as a plasma expander for shock and burn patients and as a protein supplement for patients fed intravenously. It is also used to make the

clotting factor which treats hemophiliacs.

The plasma that does not meet FDA requirements for injections is used for experiments, according to Crispen. Plasma is used as a quality control reagent, which means that plasma with known values of components is fed into machines to see if the machines are working properly. In addition, serums that determine blood types are made from plasma.

Plasmapheresis is a different process from the whole blood collection done by the American Red Cross, according to Crispen.

The Red Cross collects one pint of whole blood from its donors, a process taking eight minutes. Donations can be given once every eight weeks or about six times a year. According to a Red Cross pamphlet, plasma from the Red Cross can be used for transfusions in addition to manufacturing of products.

Sera-Tec's plasma cannot be used for transfusion, Crispen said. The Red Cross, however, does not pay its donors, arguing that blood is too precious to have a price.

Crispen said Sera-Tec has been criticized for paying its donors and making blood donations a profit oriented business. But no one criticizes hospitals or pharmaceutical companies for making profits, he said.

"Our profit per procedure is less than the amount the donor is paid per procedure," Crispen said.

Sera-Tec's profit is made by the large volume of donations, he said. About 200 people a day sell their plasma to Sera-Tec in State College, said a Sera-Tec receptionist.

"The plasmapheresis centers make profits, so I believe it's immoral not to pay donors," Crispen said.

Sera-Tec plasma donors are screened to comply with rigid FDA standards, Crispen said. Before anyone can donate, he must be examined by a physician. If he continues donating, he must be examined every year, Crispen said. Sera-Tec examines all laboratory data on each donor every four months to check that he has enough blood protein and other components so that he can continue donating, he said.

At each visit to Sera Tec, a donor is asked whether he has had any of a list of diseases. He must answer no to each disease questioned in order to donate. A donor's weight, blood pressure, pulse and blood protein levels along with tests for anemia and hepatitis are taken at each donation, Crispen said.

An individual cannot donate when he has a cold. And if his test for hepatitis is positive he cannot donate again, Crispen said.

If a donor appears for his donation drunk or under the influence of marijuana, he cannot donate, Crispen said. "We are not concerned if a donor occasionally smokes marijuana or drinks socially, but he must be alert at the time of the donation in order to answer the questions," Crispen said. When a drug addict or alcoholic slips by the screening, the FDA catches it and forbids that person from donating again, Crispen said.

Occasionally Sera-Tec donors faint from fright at their first donation, he said.

Sera-Tec takes precautions so that the red blood cells are not returned to the wrong person, Crispen said. The donor is given a permanent number for his records and at each donation he is given another number that corresponds to the number on his plasma collection bag.

Ruetschlin said his experiences with Sera-Tec have generally been good. "Where else can you make about \$4 to \$5 an hour for simply sitting around reading or talking," he said.

## Wright defends wife's govt. job

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Rep. Jim Wright, the newly elected House Democratic leader, Tuesday defended his wife's employment as a congressional aide, saying more such involvement might have prevented Capitol Hill sex scandals.

The Texan, emerging from the White House after a meeting with President Ford, commented on a story in the Washington Post about his wife Betty being on the staff of the House Public Works Committee.

"I'm very proud of Betty," Wright told reporters. "She worked for the Congress many years before we were married. This isn't a question of putting my wife on the payroll, but whether we can pursue independent careers after our marriage."

Since Wright did not hire her, his wife's employment by the committee as an administrative assistant does not violate a

law Congress passed in 1967 forbidding members to hire blood relatives.

On that score, Wright said: "Quite frankly, Betty and I have agonized over this for some time. My personal desire, very strong, would be to have Betty working with me in the majority leader's office. I need her help, I want her help."

"I have the very strong feeling," said Wright, "that if more members of Congress had their wives more intimately involved with their work, you wouldn't have had these sordid sex scandals. The wives would have seen to that."

Betty Wright already was working for the Public Works Committee four years ago when they were married. She has accepted no promotions, only automatic pay raises for all employees, and now earns \$25,000 a year.

## Woman to head diplomat association

WASHINGTON (UPI) — For the first time in history, a woman has been chosen as president of the American Foreign Service association.

Patricia Woodring, 37, a foreign service officer, was unanimously chosen in a special election by the executive board of AFSA,

which is the professional diplomats' equivalent of a trade union. She replaces John D. Hemenway, who was removed from office last month in a special recall election.

Woodring, who was a board member who was frequently in opposition to Hemenway,

will serve the remainder of Hemenway's term, until July, 1977.

She is currently chief of general recruitment in the State Department's employee division. She had previously served as a foreign service officer in Laos, Yugoslavia

and the Philippines.

AFSA represents foreign service officers in their dealings with State Department management. The organization has been paralyzed for the past few months by the dispute between the board and Hemenway.

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**UNIVERSITY CALENDAR**  
Wednesday, December 15  
**SPECIAL EVENTS**

Ritenour Swine Flu Campaign, 7 a.m., HUB ballroom.  
Intercultural Celebration, Winter Arts Festival, Findley Union Bldg. International films, 12 noon, Kern lobby, 1 p.m., HUB lounge. Christmas Crafts Demonstration, 12 noon, HUB main lounge. HUB-Free-U Coffeehouse, 8:30 p.m., Room 301 HUB.  
Five O'Clock Theatre, "Gone by Morning," 5 p.m., Pavilion Theatre.  
Coaly Society Speaking Contest, 7 p.m., HUB assembly room.  
Penn State Invitational Film Festival, 8 p.m., University Auditorium.  
Composer's Concert, 8:30 p.m., Music Bldg. recital hall.

**FILM**  
GSA Commonsplace Theatre, "A Christmas Carol," 7:30 and 9:30 p.m., Room 112 Kern.

**MEETINGS**  
Graduate Council, 3 p.m., Room 101 Kern.  
USG Academic Assembly, 7 p.m., Room 307 HUB.  
Volunteer Service Center, 7 p.m., Room 318, 319 HUB.  
AWS, 7:30 p.m., Room 225 HUB.  
SIMS, 8 p.m., Room 111 or 101 Chambers.

**EXHIBITS**  
Museum of Art: Contemporary British Pottery and Recent Accessions, Gallery B. From Gothic to Baroque, Gallery C. Contemporary Figurative Paintings from the Permanent Collection, Gallery A.  
Chambers Gallery: "Teachers, Children and Art Education" - photographs; Antique Tools.  
212A Arts Bldg: Photographs by Richard Stoner, Mark Forker, and Barbara Brubaker.

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