

Blood Drives 101: Anyone can do it

By KULLERVO "KULTSI" NURMI

Editor's note: THS member Kullervo Nurmi demonstrated the ideals behind "Pay it Forward" put into action when he organized a blood drive at FinnConX, and paid for most of the expenses out of his own pocket. He also was first in line to donate. The following first-hand report is a primer on how any Society member can Pay it Forward by organizing a blood drive at any of the science fiction or fantasy convention in their area.

I arranged a blood drive at the FinnConX/Eurocon 2003/Animecon II/Baltcon 2003 combined convention in Turku, Finland.

The drive resulted in 37 bags of blood, there were 18 first time donors, and an astounding number of people who wanted, but could not donate for one reason or other and therefore got turned away.

All in all, the convention visitors were young, pierced, tattooed, in the drink, hung over, or any combination of these. To make the things more difficult, the 80 sail ships attending the Tall Ships' Race set sail on the nearby Turku River, starting at the same time as our drive.

One thing became apparent at an early stage: You must be there early, the blood drive must be in the convention program, so that lectures, awards, panels, and whatever leave the visitors time to donate. It will only happen if the organizers are aware of the blood drive while doing their planning. This will ensure the blood drive is on the con's web site from the beginning and it may get a place in the con posters etc. This will save money.

It will also help in getting the place to do the actual taking of blood — not a small consideration, as the alternatives



Paying it Forward: Heinlein Society member Kullervo "Kultsi" Nurmi (above) not only donated blood at FinnCon X in Turku, Finland, he organized the drive and paid most of the costs out of his own pocket.

Finnish friends: These two ladies donated at FinnCon X.



may turn out to be costly. I was able to secure a classroom and the entry hall of the building next door to the one with the other con activities, a special arrangement with the University at no cost. I think the University administration thought the blood drive was a good thing. The classroom was used for the operations, and the hall for administrative trivia such as taking the persons' data; filling out the forms; waiting; sitting after the donation drinking juice, coffee, tea, with munchies while under observation. A blood mobile or the like might be OK, but the

six tables the Red Cross people had could have handled two hundred persons in the four hours we were in operation.

Contacting the local Red Cross need not be as early, because they are used to taking things to a place, setting up the operations, doing their stuff, packing up again and tidying up afterwards. They do need time in advance, as they

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