

Blood drives

Heinlein Society members pitch in across the globe

By MIKE SHEFFIELD

Over Labor Day weekend some 4,500 science fiction fans descended upon the city of Toronto, Ontario for Torcon III, the 61st World Science Fiction Convention. Naturally, the Heinlein Society was there as well to, among other things, hold a blood drive.

Unsurprisingly, there were some snafus awaiting us there. The blood drive location was changed not long before the convention began (along with nearly everything else). Fortunately, all the convention publications had the correct location shown. Unfortunately, they listed the start time of the drive as 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, which was when the setup began.

Blood collection actually began at 11:30 a.m.

But the fans were undaunted in their quest to give blood. Throughout the day they waited in line to donate, some for nearly 3 hours! No bed was empty longer than it took to get one person off of it and another on. The drive was scheduled to end at 4:30 and though no more people were allowed to sign up after that time, Canadian Blood Services continued to work until 6:00 to get through those already waiting. By the end of the day they had collected 74 units of blood from 99 who attempted to give. And there would have been more. Many people who came by were unable to make the protracted wait due to

scheduling conflicts and left without even being screened.

All in all, the blood drive was very successful and we thank Canadian Blood Services, the Torcon III committee and most especially the fans who made it possible. It is no surprise that they rose to the occasion. And they were duly rewarded for their efforts. Each donor received, in addition to the cloisonne pins given at all of our blood drives, a signed bookplate donated by David Brin, and a chance to win signed book covers from Elizabeth Moon and an original

drawing by artist GOH Kelly Freas.

What may surprise you is that this was not our first blood drive outside the United States. Just 4 weeks before, on Aug. 2, we ran a blood drive at FinnCon X in Turku, Finland. Kullervo (Kultsi) Nurmi, a Heinlein Society member, coordinated the drive for us, and it was a definite triumph thanks to the cooperation and enthusiasm of everyone involved.

Things got off to a late start, as I didn't know of the

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Deb Houdek Rule, the Heinlein Society's Webmaster, and Scholastic/Academic committee chair Geo Rule participate in the "Stranger than Stranger" panel at Torcon.