

## **A bloody good reason to be vein.**

Brethren the Worshipful Master asked me to speak to you tonight about being public about being a mason, we all get the enjoyment of being masons here in lodge and at our various functions, but does that help us bring in new members or help us be recognized as a force of good or an example of good men becoming better to our larger community?

We all know that George Washington, Buzz Aldrin and John Wayne were masons. So was FDR, Mark Twain and Roy Clark. But how many of us know the name Francis Bellamy who wrote our Pledge of Allegiance, he was a Mason, or Felix Booth, an English Gin Distiller. Does the name Thomas Boude, ring a bell? He was the brick mason for Independence hall in Philadelphia. Why am I mentioning all these people that some of us may not know as well as others? Its to show that they were mason's that had a public presence. And I am sure many of you are not familiar with the name Henry Dunant but he is the reason for my lecture tonight. He was the founder of the Red Cross and my Winding step on the staircase is about our blood program and interaction with that organization.

How many of you have actively saved a life? How about 3? Over a 100? If you have ever donated blood the answer might be more than you expect. Are you familiar with the Masonic Blood Program? It encourages us all as Masons to be part of the literal lifeblood of our Community. There are over 8 different blood types and 4 donation methods but only 3 are probably applicable to our Masonic Blood Program.

Whole blood donation is the most common and is what usually occurs at blood drive events open to the public or at a bloodmobile. It is the easiest, takes the shortest amount of time to donate and all blood types are welcome. You have to meet the basic eligibility criteria, you can do it once every 56 days or about 6 times a year and it takes about an hour total from door to door. This type of donation counts as 1 unit for your lodge if you are looking to achieve the SJ Levy award for donations.

The second type is what's known as Power Red and uses an apheresis machine to process your donation and takes only Red blood cells and returns all other fluids. Typically done by appointment or at specialty blood drives where the equipment is available, it takes about 1.5 hours in total and is used to support trauma patients, newborns and emergency transfusions for patients that have experienced significant blood loss. O, A, B Negative and O Positive are the primary blood types needed for this type of donation. This donation type has a few extra eligibility requirements and a longer recovery time so you can only do this process once every 112 days or about 3 times a year. However, for each "unit" you earn 10 points towards the Levy award.

Thirdly, we come to platelet donations. This method takes the longest to complete donation and is typically done by appointment at an actual donation center. But it can be done weekly or up to 24 times a year. Platelets are used to help form clots and stop bleeding. These cells are used primarily during surgeries and organ transplants and to assist with cancer treatments. Unfortunately, they have a short shelf life and need to be used within 5 days of the donation. Donating platelets tends to take between 2-3 hours depending on how the donor's platelet count and how many units can be taken. One donation using this method provides 5 times the number of platelets that is provided during a whole blood donation.

All blood types are open to this method but certain types may be in more demand to meet the needs of the community. Given the larger commitment of time, platelet donations also earn you 10 points per "unit" donated toward the SJ Levy award. One or two members of a lodge donating platelets on a regular basis throughout the year could provide enough points to qualify a lodge for the Levy award provided the other administrative requirements were achieved.

I hope this information sparks an interest in the lodge of helping our community and perhaps establishing a goal of seeking the Levy award now and in the future like we do for the Stokes, Morlock and Hillman awards. And remember that each unit potentially saves 3 or more lives. As your newly appointed District Blood Coordinator I encourage you to take the time to Donate in one of the methods I have summarized for you, I am available to help if you have further questions.



***'The Winding Staircase - A path to improving yourself in Masonry'***

***By: Michael J. Caro, LEO, Tuckahoe Lodge No. 347***

***4/22***