

fall 2004

lifelines

the Blood Centers of the Pacific Newsletter



**Blood Centers
of the Pacific**

a member of the Blood Systems Family



A WOMAN OF THE WORLD

by *Jane Kuczma*

I have often heard that blood donors rarely know what their blood is used for after a donation. I can tell you firsthand – it saves people like me.

hard to get my blood pressure up. After countless cups of salty chicken broth and a bag of saline, she finally released me when by blood pressure hit 50/30 (normal is below 120/80). I was just glad to get out of there and happy to head home, although I was exhausted and feeling worse by the minute.

Jane Kuczma, organ and blood recipient

At the age of 6, I was diagnosed with Type I diabetes

(where the body does not produce insulin), and by 18, I started going blind in one eye as a result of the disease. After numerous laser treatments and a failed vitrectomy (retinal reattachment), I lost complete sight in my right eye. Three years later, I lost two-thirds of my kidney function and was put on a kidney transplant list in 1985.

“Live on and give on.”
-Jane Kuczma

Fortunately, for the next 10 years, things seemed to be going well – my kidney function had miraculously remained stable and my diabetes was in better control. However, my doctor still advised that I re-sign up for the transplant list, this time for both a kidney and a pancreas.

Later that night, it became clear my mother was right – I was incredibly sick. Mom could barely feel my pulse. She honestly thought that she would witness the first of her eight children die, right in front of her. She knew I needed blood, but now all she could do was wait for the ambulance and pray.

In October 1996, I received “the call” for my transplant. I had high hopes but unfortunately, my transplant was unsuccessful. During my hospital stay, which lasted 24 long days, I received more than 10 units of blood. I became severely anemic and received blood transfusions two units at a time, to help replace what was disappearing from my body.

The ambulance took me to the nearest hospital with lights and sirens going. I had lost two-thirds of my blood and my heart rate was near 122 beats per minute (normal adult heart rate is 60 to 100 bpm.) The drugs the doctors used to try to convert my heart to normal sinus rhythm were not working. They cardioverted my heart out of ventricular tachycardia, a potentially lethal disruption of normal heartbeat that results in the heart not being able to adequately pump blood throughout the body.

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Ten months after my first kidney/pancreas transplant, I was called for my second. I felt this transplant would go smoothly, as I had already been through it all. Ah, but I was so wrong! While there were many events that occurred after my second transplant, I want to focus on one in particular, as it deals with once again, receiving a large quantity of donated blood.

One night, not long after my hospital discharge, I had a friend drive me to dialysis so I didn't have to listen to my mother saying, “You really need to go to the hospital. You need blood. You need a transfusion.” I was so weak I had to be wheelchaired into the dialysis center. After dialysis, the nurse had to work

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Lifelines

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For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact us at 1-888-393-GIVE.

www.bloodcenters.org

Quick Bits

We've Gone East!

Blood Centers of the Pacific (BCP) has gone east... across the bay! To serve a wider expanse of donors, we've now opened a Walnut Creek location at:

Northcreek Church Annex
2255 Ygnacio Valley Rd.
Walnut Creek, CA
94598-3343

Don't forget to check us out, our Walnut Creek Center hours are every Monday from 2pm to 7pm.

For more information, call Paula Butterfield, (707) 399-2427 or visit www.bloodcenters.org.

Pros and Cons

Following is a humorous but heartfelt email blood donor Tamar Cohn of San Rafael, sent to her friends and family. Remember, we can all help, not only by giving blood but following Tamar's example and encouraging friends and family to donate this holiday season!

"The blood bank people say that the winter season brings the most demand for blood, but also the fewest people donating. Not convinced about donating? Let's look at the pros and cons...

Pros

Doesn't take long: under an hour.

Provides respite: you're off your cell phone, off your feet, reading a magazine or book, or just closing your eyes for a few minutes.

Amusing: you get to answer complex and semi-embarrassing questions regarding having sex with a man who's had sex with a man who's received money for having sex and was using a needle to take drugs in Africa in the last 12 months, etc.

BCP Says Goodbye to a Friend

A dedicated BCP volunteer in the Blood Products and Services department at the Irwin Center - San Francisco, Dr. Herbert Greenwood, passed away this past July. He was 88.

Dr. Greenwood began volunteering with BCP in 1988 and had clocked in more than 1,800 hours of volunteer time with us. He played a vital role in transporting blood to and from local hospitals.

A well-known and loved San Francisco pediatrician, Dr. Greenwood retired in 1981. An active volunteer for many other organizations, Dr. Greenwood was also an avid fisherman who was endeared by all who knew him.

BCP has lost a good friend. Dr. Greenwood will be deeply missed.

Fashionable: you get to wear a brightly colored stretchy bandage around your elbow, alerting people to your status as a do-gooder.

Informative: find out your blood pressure, pulse rate, blood type and iron level.

Tastes good: well...the cookies, trail mix and juice do.

Excuses sloth and gluttony: no heavy exercise for the rest of the day (Hey, go early!), and a well-balanced meal is required within four hours.

Cons

Takes an hour; can't get any work done; have to answer complex and semi-embarrassing questions; that stupid-looking stretchy bandage; high-carb food is pushed on you; and, excuse me? But they stick a needle in you and remove some of your blood. I mean, hello...?

So, convinced now? Donate soon before your inevitable winter cold. You do want plenty of blood to be available should there - God forbid, *ptui, ptui, ptui* - be a need for it. Don't you? Sure you do."

Board Member Spotlight

by *Angela Woon*



BCP's newest board member, Dr. Shen.

Blood Centers of the Pacific welcomed its newest member to its board of directors this past summer. Bern Shen, M.D., M.Phil., comes to BCP with a long resume list of accomplishments in both the medical and technical fields.

“My UCSF (University of California, San Francisco) colleague, Dr. Daniel

Stites, who serves on the BCP Board referred me,” said Dr. Shen. “I look forward to being on the board and sharing my experience in academia and industry, in the United States and abroad.”

A 1974 Harvard College graduate in Biochemistry, Dr. Shen went on to pursue a medical degree and master in philosophy in Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry at Yale University. He's been double Board Certified, doing an Internal Medicine Residency at Yale-New Haven/Waterbury Hospitals and a second residency in Emergency Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh Hospitals. More recently, Dr. Shen completed a mid-career health policy fellowship at UCSF's Institute for Health Policy Studies.

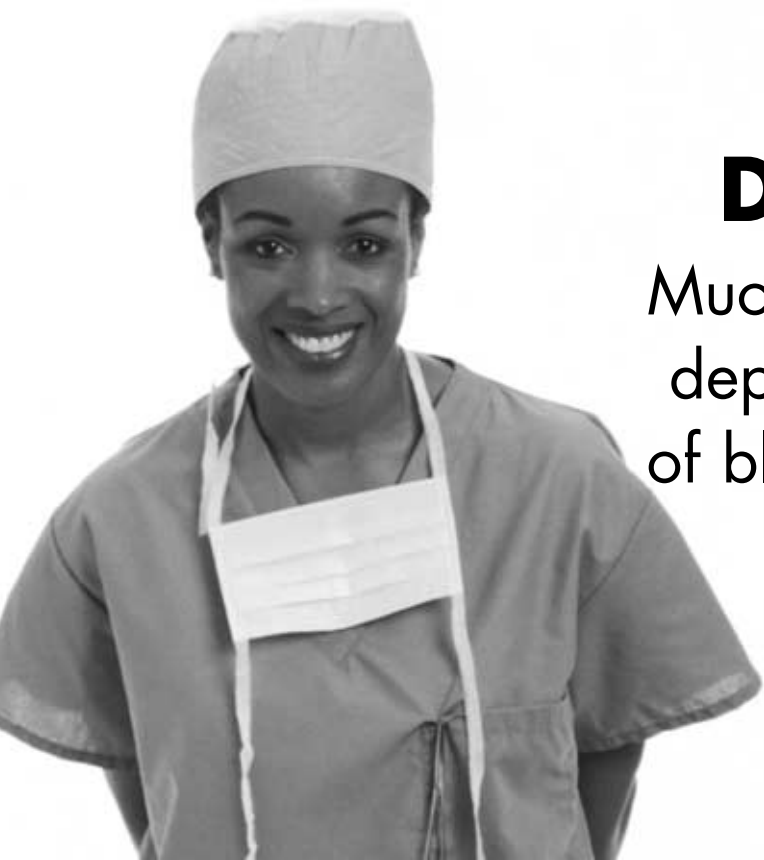
“I chose the medical profession because of the combination of human contact and intellectual challenge,” said Dr. Shen, 50. “I greatly enjoyed clinical practice, most recently at UCSF, for 15 years before retiring in 1999.”

Married to a nursing executive at UCSF, Dr. Shen has literally been around the world and back as a result of his work in emergency and international disaster medicine. Among his global experiences, Dr. Shen was the physician at the U.S. research station at the South Pole, a volunteer at the CIWEC Clinic in Nepal, a physician on a sailing hospital ship in the Marshall Islands, a Project HOPE Fellow for the Costa Rica Emergency Medicine Residency Program, and a part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency Urban Search/Research Team during the Oklahoma City bombing.

Dr. Shen also has a parallel career track in high-tech, having worked in the last decade at Hewlett-Packard Labs and Oracle, doing medical software and business development. Currently, Dr. Shen is the Director of Health Programs at the Institute for the Future (IFF), an independent nonprofit forecasting research group in Menlo Park. “While I miss many aspects of clinical work, my work in high-tech and at IFF has allowed me to think about health issues and trends in a broader context with a wide range of business and nonprofit clients,” said Dr. Shen. “It's fascinating to see patterns of change across industries, geographies and time.”

A Bay Area resident for the past 10 years, Dr. Shen was born and raised on the East Coast.

BCP is proud to have Dr. Shen on its board of directors. Welcome!



Did You Know?

Much of today's medical care depends on a steady supply of blood from healthy donors.

Thanking BCP's Donors, Coordinators and Volunteers

by *Angela Woon*

BCP'S RECOGNITION EVENTS

This past summer, Blood Centers of the Pacific (BCP) honored and thanked our support network - whole blood and apheresis donors, blood drive coordinators and volunteers - for their commitment to helping save lives throughout 2003.

NORTH BAY REGION

More than 70 people attended BCP's first event of the summer - the North Bay Center Whole Blood Donor and Blood Drive Coordinator Luncheon. Held in June at the Napa Valley Marriott Hotel and Spa, a good time was had by all. Guests were treated to a scrumptious array of luncheon delights and took home wine glasses engraved with the BCP logo as party favors.

Later on in the month, BCP congratulated our North Bay Center Apheresis donors for their dedication in helping Northern California patients in the past year. More than 100 people partook in the event, which was held in the same venue. Kim-Anh Nguyen, M.D., BCP's Medical Director, talked about "What's New at BCP," while blood recipient Meghan Daily gave a moving speech about her recovery from Thrombotic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (TTP) and her need for more than 980 units of lifesaving blood.

BAY AREA REGION

Approximately 100 BCP staff members, donors and their guests attended the Peninsula Center - Burlingame (PCB) Whole Blood and Apheresis Brunch. The event was held at the Crowne Plaza in Foster City.

Jane Kuczma (see cover story), a blood and organ recipient, spoke about her need for blood. Not only did she manage to move the crowd but she made them laugh too with her sense of humor. Wendy Dressel, Apheresis Ambassador, also spoke and encouraged whole blood donors to become apheresis donors.

The following month, whole blood and apheresis donors from San Francisco and Marin were honored for their milestones reached in 2003. More than 170 attended the event at the Radisson Miyako Hotel, San Francisco.

Angela Keane, mother of 13-month-old blood recipient, Morgan, touched the audience with her story of her daughter's use of blood, which was accompanied by a slideshow of photos. Dr. Kim-Anh Nguyen spoke on the "Advances in Blood Safety at BCP."

BAY AREA VOLUNTEERS

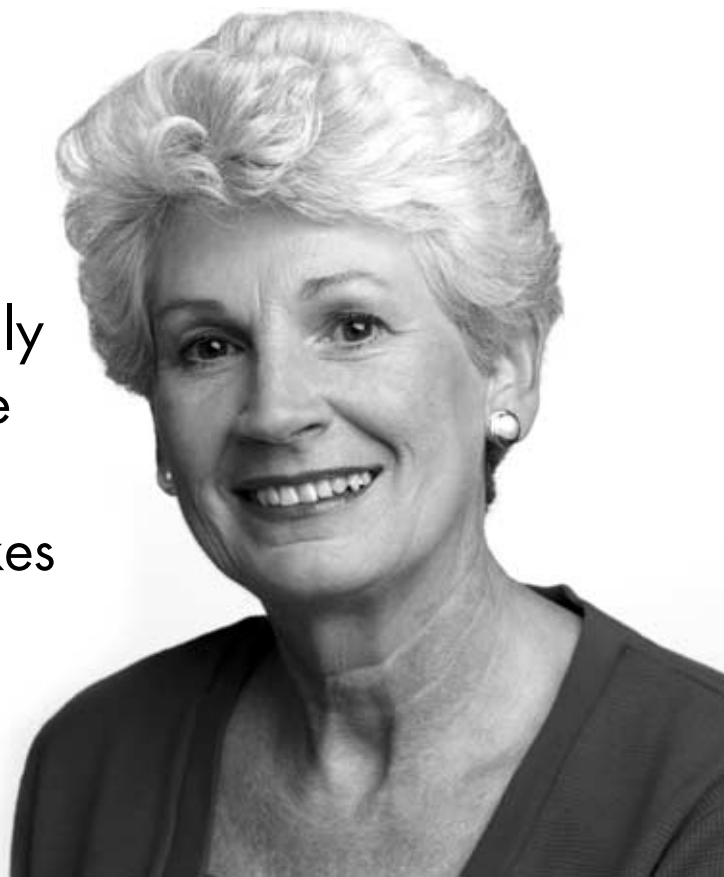
In October, volunteers from the Bay Area region wined and dined at the Waterfront Restaurant, San Francisco. More than 50 volunteers came to the luncheon. The food was great, the sun was shining, the view was superb, nothing could have been more perfect! Attendees were given party favors with a certificate for manicure services compliments of Laurie Biagi and the Skyline College Cosmetology students.

The highlight of the event was the presentation of the Bernard Haines Award, which went to PCB volunteer Tony Vecchio. Tony volunteers six days a week as a driver and has clocked in more than 2800 volunteer hours. The award was established in memoriam of a longtime volunteer who passed away in 2003.

BCP thanks all those involved in making these events a success! Special thanks to the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Miyako Hotel, Waterfront Restaurant, Laurie Biagi and the Skyline College Cosmetology students, and See's Candies for their generous donations.

Did You Know?

The actual blood donation usually takes less than 10 minutes. The entire process, from when you sign in to the time you leave, takes about 45 minutes.



He Said, She Said

by Angela Woon



Longtime BCP volunteers, Victor and Anita Keyak

The Keyaks, like every married couple, disagree on some things and agree on others. But one thing's for sure, they both share a common interest in volunteering and both agree it's a rewarding experience! Husband Victor, 80, and wife Anita Keyak, 77, have been longtime volunteers with BCP. This fall, *Lifelines* decided

to get to know our dedicated volunteers a little better...

How did you both meet? How long have you been married?

Victor says: We went on a blind date and it developed from there. We were engaged after a few months and were married a year later. Our marriage works because of our understanding and tolerance for each other. It's a compromise - it's all about giving and receiving 50/50, 90/10, 10/90, etc..., but we always work things out.

Anita says: We've been married for 56 years and our first date was here in San Francisco.

How long have you been a BCP volunteer and how did you get involved?

Victor says: It's been about 10 years since I started volunteering. Anita enjoyed volunteering at BCP so I decided to help out as well. I have since volunteered more than 3,329 hours.

Anita says: I've been volunteering since 1974. I came in to give blood liked the nurse's aide who was helping out, so I decided to volunteer! To date, I have volunteered more than 4,500 hours.

How often do you volunteer and what do you do?

Victor says: I volunteer for mobile drives doing registration and am at the donor canteen during mobile drives.

Anita says: I started out as a volunteer nurse's aide. Now, I am at the donor canteen every Tuesday from 1pm to 4:30pm at the Irwin Center. I have also volunteered at blood drives at the Stern Grove Festival in San Francisco.

Why volunteer? What do you enjoy about volunteering?

Victor says: I enjoy helping and talking to people. I like to give back to the community.

Anita says: I have the time and interest. I realize the importance of blood in the community and like to encourage people to come back. I also enjoy meeting people and seeing the regular donors.

Are you a blood donor?

Victor says: I have been donating since I was 18 and am a whole blood and apheresis donor. It's important that we start educating high school kids about blood donation. That's why I like volunteering at high school drives to encourage them to give. Once they start, hopefully it will become a good habit.

Anita says: I used to donate blood but have since been deferred.

"I enjoy helping and talking to people. I like to give back to the community."

-Victor Keyak,
on why he likes to volunteer at BCP

Do you have other interests?

Victor says: I volunteer once a week in the Health Education Department at Kaiser Hospital and once a week at UCSF/Mt. Zion Cancer Center.

Anita says: I also volunteer once a month as a docent at Temple Emanuel. Vic and I also like to play bridge and travel. We've been to Europe, Israel, the Far East and all over the United States.

A retired professional engineer, Victor and Anita have three children and are the proud grandparents of 11. The couple continues to live and actively volunteer in San Francisco.

On behalf of Northern Californian patients, thank you Victor and Anita for your dedicated service!

Hereditary Hemochromatosis Donation Program

by Lisa Bloch

Hereditary Hemochromatosis (HH) is a genetic disease that results in iron overload. The preferred treatment for reducing iron stores is periodic phlebotomy.

In the past, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) required that blood collected from people with HH be discarded unless it was labeled as donated by an individual with this condition. Unfortunately, this differentiation of HH labeled blood from volunteer community blood caused hospitals to decline blood from HH donors.

In 2001, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) concluded that "blood donors with (hereditary) hemochromatosis... do not pose a greater risk to blood safety than other donors," (NIH press release, 9/25/01). There was no longer a need to distinguish HH blood from community blood. Now, blood centers may receive a variance from FDA regulations that allows them to use this blood for transfusion, without labeling it as HH blood. Blood Centers of the Pacific (BCP) received such a variance in January, 2003.

If an individual with HH meets the criteria for community blood donors, their blood can now be used for transfusions, and BCP will collect their blood free of charge. If they are not eligible, BCP will still perform the therapeutic phlebotomies free of charge, although the collected blood will not be used for transfusion.

The phlebotomy frequency for each HH patient is determined by their personal physician. Patients who require phlebotomy more

often than every 56 days will require a prescription or doctor's order specifying the frequency.

HH patients who have had previous therapeutic phlebotomies at BCP must be evaluated for donor eligibility before their first community blood donation. Once they are eligible, HH donors can donate at any BCP donation center. Mobile blood drives, however, are not able to take HH donors at this time.

For more information, please contact the Special Donations department at (415) 567-6400.



Hereditary Hemochromatosis donors can give blood at any of our BCP donation centers.

Woman of the World, continued from page one...

With a hematocrit around 11 (adult women have a normal hematocrit level of 36 to 44 percent), I needed many units of blood to restore me to full health. This lifesaving blood, donated by strangers willing to share theirs so freely, not only saved my life during this unexpected bleed out, but also restored my non-functioning transplanted kidney to full health. Thank you donors!

There were many events that came between this short glimpse into my life, and through it all, I received more than 40 units of blood components. I consider myself a "woman of the world," as I believe my blood donors are representative of all humanity - diversity at its finest.

I am fortunate that there were enough donors to provide for my many needs of this lifesaving fluid. And while I am saddened I cannot give blood due to my medical issues (now really, you know I would be first in line if not!), the next best thing I can do is to help spread the word and encourage those who can to roll up their sleeve and donate. The return on your contributions has been priceless to me. May God bless you for saving my life.

Live on and give on.

Way to go Paul!

by Angela Woon

You may recall our previous *Lifelines* feature story on blood and organ recipient, Paul Yang. This past summer, Paul participated in the 8th U.S. Transplant Games in Minneapolis in the 100-meter and 50-meter swimming, both freestyle and breaststroke.

Originally from Taiwan, Paul had chronic active hepatitis B - a continuing inflammation of the liver that damages the liver cells - for 15 years. In 1988, after a week on the priority organ recipient list, Paul received a liver transplant and 221 units of blood during nine and a half hours of surgery.

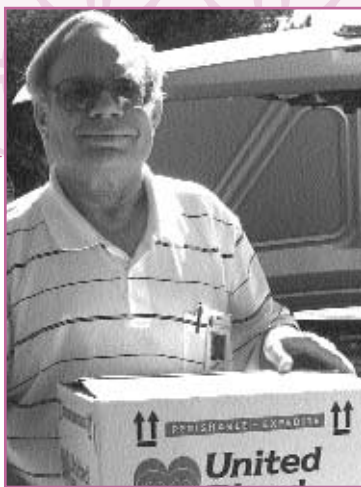
Eight years later, due to the effects of one of the immunosuppressant medications he was taking, Paul had to undergo a total hip replacement on his left side, again needing donated blood.

Since then, Paul has been doing well and remains active not only in sports like swimming, but also in the Asian American community, where he does outreach for the California Transplant Donor Network.

The U.S. Transplant Games this year included 1,500 recipient athletes, and 2,000 donor and recipient families.



A happy Paul Yang in downtown Minneapolis next to a bronze of Mary Tyler Moore.



Volunteer Driver Tony Vecchio delivering blood to the hospital

Every Minute Counts

by Angela Woon

If you have some spare time, want to meet people or just want to give back through community service, why not volunteer with Blood Centers of the Pacific (BCP)?

“Volunteers are an integral part of the BCP lifesaving team,” said Debbie Bingham, BCP’s Volunteer Supervisor. “They provide direct services to blood donors and play a critical role in supporting the blood center.”

BCP offers many opportunities at its 12 locations throughout Northern California. “Every minute counts at BCP – whether it is an hour or four hours of your time, we’ll work with you to find a schedule that best fits,” said Debbie. “By volunteering your time, not only will you be giving back to the community, but you’ll also develop new skills, gain experience, meet new people and most importantly, help save lives!”

If you’d like to become a BCP volunteer, consider the following roles:

Courier/Driver – Help us make deliveries to local hospitals and ensure their blood orders are filled immediately. Volunteers must

have a valid California driver’s license, a good driving record and be able to carry up to 10 pounds.

Mobile Blood Drive Aide – Accompany our donor collections staff on mobile blood drives and help out with donor appointments and registration.

Canteen Host – While serving refreshments to our donors, help us keep an eye on their health and safety after their donation.

Laboratory Assistant – Volunteer your medical/laboratory research knowledge in one of our research laboratories at BCP’s headquarters in San Francisco.

Office Assistant – Assist the various departments at BCP with your organizational and clerical skills. Basic clerical and/or computer skills needed with additional training provided, if required.

“High school students who have to complete their volunteer requirements for graduation are also encouraged to apply,” said Debbie. “We have computer, clerical and many other opportunities for them.”

For more information on becoming a BCP volunteer, visit us at www.bloodcenters.org or call Debbie Bingham at (415) 567-6400 ext. 422.



Blood Centers *of the Pacific*

270 Masonic Avenue
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lifelines

We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results.

-Herman Melville

