

## Donating blood makes perfect holiday gift

By Lois Swoboda  
Times Reporter

Giving blood is a good thing to do for many reasons and not the least of these is the service we do to our neighbors.

Apalachicola Mayor Van Johnson was the recipient of a transfusion in Feb. 2007 that probably saved his life. Here is his story.

"Early last year I went to Bay Medical Center with a bleeding ulcer. After I was admitted and awaiting treatment, I passed out. I had lost about four units of blood. That's about half of the blood in your body," he said. "Because I was able to receive a transfusion I was fine and I checked out of the hospital three days later. When Susan Richardson and Ralph Peterson started this blood drive, I shared this story with them."

There will be a blood drive again at the Natural Medicine Shoppe on Monday, Dec. 8 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.



**Van Johnson**  
Apalachicola Mayor

All donors will be entered into a weekly drawing for a \$50 gift card. Please pitch in and help your neighbors before they need it. It's the best holiday gift of all.

For more information call Aimee A. Palmer, Area Blood Drive Coordinator, Bay Medical Blood Donor Center

747-6570.

Important for African-Americans to give blood.

The African American population is growing faster than the Caucasian population and, as it does, so does the need for African-Americans to give blood.

African-Americans make up 13 percent of the US population but fewer than 2 percent of blood donors. Nearly 20 percent of all African-Americans have type B blood, compared to 11 percent of Caucasian Americans. Many African-Americans also have type O blood. Seasonal shortages of these blood types are common because these types are in great demand but short supply.

Blood type, like eye color, is an inherited trait. Some African Americans have rare blood types unique to the black

community. For these patients, blood from an African-American donor may be their only hope.

For example the U trait is found in one in 250 African-Americans but never found in Caucasians; Js(b) is found in one in 319 African-Americans but never in Caucasians and Fy(b) is found in eight out of 10 African Americans and only one out of 10 Caucasians.

African-Americans are at greater risk than Caucasians for cancer, heart disease and complications during childbirth, all of which require blood products for successful treatment. The most compatible blood for some critically ill patients is likely to come from someone of the same ethnic, racial and genetic background. All of these are reasons why it is important for African-Americans to give blood.