

Easiest way to save a life

EDITORIAL

There are some things about our species that really make me scratch my head. For example, motorists who refuse to give up the passing lane on the highway. They're like NRA members. 'I'll give you this passing lane when you take it from my cold, dead hands.'

One would imagine they know better, but refuse to move all the same despite the frequent wild hand gestures and flashing of bright lights from those behind them. I think studies should be done to find out why they have this unnatural need to remain in the passing lane while driving dead on the speed limit.

Another trait many people share is the refusal to give blood, especially when it's needed the most (which is right now, in case you're wondering). I understand that a few people have a genuine fear of needles and others feel they can't spare the half hour or so, but those don't hold water for me.

People survive because other people give blood. Doctors were able to treat the survivors of the Humboldt Broncos bus tragedy because strangers gave blood.

For those of you who don't know how it works allow me to walk you through the process.

Some people walk in, but the best way to go about it is to register on the Canadian Blood Services website at blood.ca. It just takes a minute. Then you make an appointment at the location closest to you. In this case, that would be the Caledon Community Complex at 6215 Old Church Road on Aug. 2 from 3 ? 7 p.m.

Now there are a few health-related questions you're going to have to answer, most of which can be answered online. At least one of them has to do with handling monkeys, so if you're an organ grinder or an extra from the Planet of the Apes movie, you have an excuse.

When you arrive, check in at the front desk. If your experience is anything like mine, you'll be treated like royalty just for being there.

This brings me to a brief break in the process to inform you that while nothing should take the place of regular medical check-ups with your doctor, giving blood is actually a pretty good way to keep on top of things. I've given blood dozens of times, but on one occasion it was discovered that my red blood cell count was low. I was advised to see my physician, who put me through a battery of tests I wouldn't have otherwise requested, including a colonoscopy that led to biopsies being done on a number of polyps. None were cancerous, but all of this occurred because I tried to give blood.

Back to our tour.

The actual donation of blood will be about the easiest thing you'll do all day. You'll lie down on a bed, they'll search for a vein and just like that you're saving someone's life while relaxing on your back. It doesn't take long at all before they bandage you up and send you over for some fruit juice and cookies. You likely won't feel any effects of the donation other than perhaps a little weakness. I once walked my dog through a forest with many rises and drops in terrain and felt like I was an old man by the end of it, but they did warn me not to do anything like that in the first place so it's on me.

One other point that needs to be made: If you have O-negative blood, everything doubles in importance because everyone, regardless of blood type, can accept O-negative. You have blood that really wants to be heroic, so allow it to do its job.

There are people everywhere, every day, whose life or death depends on getting blood from a stranger. Feel good about yourself and

help them out, won't you?