



CRAIG OROSZ □ The Lima News

Ralph Roller, 90, of Lima rolls up his sleeve before giving blood Tuesday at the St. Rita's Auxiliary Conference Center on Market Street. Roller, who has given 22 gallons, is the oldest person giving blood in Allen County.

Evans honored

Doris Evans, a home health aide with Van Wert Area Private Duty Services, was recently honored as a finalist for "Home Health Aide of the Year," an award given by Private Duty Services, Inc., a non-profit organization serving 15 counties in northwest/west central Ohio. Evans was chosen among nominees from 10 area home health agencies for the outstanding care she provides to her clients.

Home health aides provide essential services to homebound elderly, ill and disabled individuals including assistance with bathing, grooming, meals, and other activities of daily living. These services enable individuals to live with dignity and a sense of independence in their own home. For more information call Private Duty Services at 238-3714.



Susan Hamrick of Private Duty Services gives Evans her award. *wife of "Wild" Bill Evans*

90-year-old still taking it in the arm for others

By GREG SOWINSKI
The Lima News

Ralph C. Roller is a 5 foot 10, 210 pound blood-giving machine.

He's also 90 years old and has given 22 gallons of blood in the past 50 years.

"I was trying for 25 (gallons) I don't know whether I will make it," Roller said Tuesday. "I need three gallons. That will take four years."

Although Allen County has a list of active donors who have given more blood than Roller, he is the oldest, said Brenda Steele, the blood services director for the Allen County-Lima Chapter of the American Red Cross.

"I may not be the best but I'm the oldest," Roller said.

Nevertheless, the numbers are astonishing. During his life, Roller has given blood 176 times, which equates to helping 528 people, Steele said.

The retired Excello Corp. worker can donate one

pint of his O positive blood every 56 days. He occasionally misses the donation date marked on a donor card he carries in his wallet but if he does he quickly makes it up, he said.

Donating is limited to every 56 days because the body needs time to replace the pint taken, Steele said. Humans have on average 10 to 12 pints of blood, she said.

The only major break in his donation ritual was in the mid 1970s when the Red Cross stopped taking the blood of senior citizens, he said. But about 10 years later, seniors were able to give blood again and Roller started back.

"I tell him he's walking around without any blood. He's giving it all away," his wife, Marcelle, said.

Roller's blood donating began in Forest when the local blood-drive coordinator for the Red Cross in Hardin County asked him to give. The coordinator wanted to beat Kenton, although the

blood-drive coordinator in Kenton probably wasn't aware the people in Forest were trying to outdo their larger neighbor, Roller said.

"He hustled a lot of blood donors," Roller said of the former Forest coordinator. "I got my first gallon in Hardin County and then I moved up to Lima and it's been Lima ever since."

Roller attributes his good health to family genes. Longevity runs in his family, he said.

"I don't have a doctor. I tag along with the wife and get my flu shots and that's it," he said.

One of Roller's five children is pursuing his father's caring duty.

"I've got a son who is working on 19 (gallons). He'll make it. He's only 54," Roller said.

Roller has never had to postpone a donation due to illness. Not even the prick from a sharp needle has scared him away, he said.

"It hasn't happened yet but at this age you can never tell," he said of potential problems.

Last month, he had a minor setback for a week or so when the level of iron in his blood was not high enough, his wife said.

"We ate liver for several meals, a week or so, so he could get his iron up," she said.

He's led a healthy life and worked as a volunteer firefighter for the Bath Township Fire Department until he was in his early 70s, he said. Once Roller hits 25 gallons, he said he may retire from the blood donating business.