

'Oh, man, I'm sorry mister'

The following story has been circulating through the internet and was submitted via e-mail:

The man brushed off the reaction as ignorance, but the smirks began to get to him. He looked one of the rude men square in the eye, placed his hand beneath the ribbon and asked, quizzically, "This?" With that the men all began to laugh out loud. The man he addressed said as he fought back laughter, "Hey, sorry man, but we were just commenting on how pretty your little pink ribbon looks against your blue jacket!"

The middle aged man calmly motioned for the joker to come over to his table, and invited him to sit down. As uncomfortable as he was, the man obliged, not really sure why. In a soft voice, the middle aged man said, "I wear this ribbon to bring awareness about breast cancer. I wear it in my mother's honor."

"Oh, sorry dude. She died of breast cancer?" "No, she didn't. She's alive and well. But her breasts nourished me as an infant, and were a soft resting place for my head when I was scared or lonely as a little boy. I'm very grateful for my mother's breasts, and her health."

"Umm," the stranger replied, "yeah."

"And I wear this ribbon to honor my wife," the middle aged man went on. "And she's ok, too?", the other guy asked. "Oh, yes. She's fine. Her breasts have been a great source of loving pleasure for both of us, and with them she nurtured our beautiful daughter 23 years ago. I am grateful for my wife's breasts, and her health." "Uh huh. And I guess you wear it to honor your daughter, also?"

"No, it's too late to honor my daughter by wearing it now. My daughter died of breast cancer one month ago. She thought she was too young to have breast cancer, so when she accidentally noticed a small lump she ignored it. She thought that since it wasn't painful, it must not be anything to worry about."

Shaken and ashamed, the now sober stranger said, "Oh, man, I'm sorry mister."

"So, in my daughter's memory, too, I proudly wear this little ribbon, which allows me the opportunity to enlighten others. Now, go home and talk to your wife and your daughters, your mother and your friends. And here..." The middle aged man reached in his pocket and handed the other man a little pink ribbon. The other guy looked at it, slowly raised his head and asked, "Can you help me put it on?"



Average Size of Tumor Found by Mammography and Breast Self-Exam (BSE)

- Average sized lump found by getting regular mammograms
- Average sized lump found by first mammogram

Average sized lump found by women practicing regular BSE

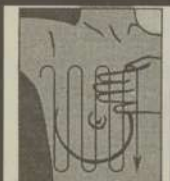
Average sized lump found by women practicing occasional BSE

Average sized lump found by women who do not do BSE

Remember: The smaller the lump, the easier it is to treat, and the better the chances are of saving the breast.

Information contributed by Clackamas County Breast & Cervical Health Program

Steps for Breast Self Examination



To find out more about breast self exams, contact your doctor or 1-800-Im-aware

Join the fight...

SALENA DE LA CRUZ
Sports Co-Editor

Did you know one of every eight women will get breast cancer? I'm here to ask you to join the fight against this terrible disease.

I'm not talking to women alone. Every year more than 1,300 men will get breast cancer also. Today there are an estimated 175,000 women with breast cancer, of which 43,300 will die [along with 400 men].

There are breakthroughs every day in technology to help research and eventually one day cure breast cancer.

Starting at age 20 women should practice monthly breast self-exams (BSE). At 40, a woman should do monthly BSE's and an annual Clinical Breast Exam (CBE) and mammography screening. A mammography is a special x-ray

technique to help locate lumps in breasts.

The older a woman gets, the more at risk she is for getting breast cancer, however with early detection, the survival rate is increased.

Breast Cancer Awareness month is October, but why stop there? Why not increase our awareness on a day to day basis and on a higher level?

Think what you as an individual might do. Man or woman. Your help is needed. Participate in awareness programs. Volunteer your services to your local chapter of the American Cancer Society. Tell your friends and family what you are doing and get them involved. Help everyone to know the importance of Breast Cancer Awareness. Wear a pink ribbon to help promote the "best protection, early detection."

Clackamas County is offering free women's health exams for women 40 or older. To be eligible you must have no insurance or limited benefits.

For more information or to see if you can help, call 1-800-Im-Aware or 1-800-ACS-2345.

The Benefits of Breast Cancer

MARCIA KEITH

Associate Dean
Division of Business,
Community Education and
Criminal Justice

Editor's Note: Marcia Keith wrote this article for the American Association of Women in Community Colleges newsletter.

The above title may seem odd, facetious, or even an attempt to trivialize something very serious. I don't mean it to be any of those things. I really do mean to tell you about the benefits that I have realized by having had breast cancer.

In 1973 I noticed a change in a mole on my abdomen. I was diagnosed with malignant melanoma and had a softball-sized chunk of tissue removed. (No more bikinis!)

Eighteen months later I noticed a lump the shape and size of an almond just at the top edge of my left breast. It was diagnosed as a metastasis of the original melanoma. I had that lump removed, along with a few lymph nodes and became known to my husband, affectionately, as "Crooked Tit."

During this

time I was concerned, but not devastated. After all I was only 30 or so and was going to live forever. The immediate and most profound effect was the decision not to have children, based on my doctor's advice that the hormonal change during pregnancy might reactivate the melanoma. An ancillary outcome was a subconscious decision not to delay doing things that I wanted to do, not to live too much for tomorrow, but to look to today for life's pleasures. That tendency is still with me. I don't have much of a savings account, for example. I will retire soon, but without many vacation days on the books. I am often accused of "trying to do it all." I maintain that living more in today than in tomorrow is a good thing and a benefit brought about by my experience with cancer.

Eight years later my current boyfriend discovered a sizable mass in my right breast extending into my arm pit. Further research had determined that the previous lump was not a metastasis of the melanoma, but was in fact breast cancer. So I had a double mastectomy in November of 1981, followed by a year of radiation and chemotherapy. I am a 25-year cancer survivor and have lived the last 17 1/2 years cancer-free.

Cancer-free, but not free of cancer's effects.

I now know in a way that I never truly knew before that I will die - and I know that I may die as soon as today or tomorrow. That knowledge changes things. It makes my friends

more dear. It makes my family more valuable. It makes most problems unworthy of anguish. It makes having fun very important. It makes having love in my life the most crucial goal. It makes today a gift and tomorrow a dream. Having had breast cancer has made my life fuller and richer.

These are the benefits I have derived from having breast cancer. These are benefits that I wish for you. But I don't wish you to achieve them in the same way that I did. I wish never to have another woman join this reluctant sisterhood.

So, I am asking for two things from you:

First, please get in touch with me if you would be willing to help organize your college's participation in your local version of the Race for the Cure. My e-mail address is marciak@clackamas.cc.or.us.

Second, please check with your physician about having a mammogram soon. You should have a baseline mammogram at age 35. You should have a mammogram every 1-2 years between the ages of 40 and 49. After age 50 you should have a mammogram every year. The average-sized lump found by regular mammograms is 1/8 inch in diameter. The average sized lump found by women practicing regular breast self-examination is 1/2 inch in diameter. The average sized lump found by women not practicing breast self-examination is 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Please honor yourself and those who love you by having a mammogram.