

## State and Local

# Nurse: Self-examination gives early warning of breast cancer

By Jill Kaml  
*Reporter*

Because of self-examination, Cindy White discovered two lumps in her left breast two years ago and a doctor had her get a mammogram. The lumps were removed through surgery and tests showed they were cancerous.

White, a registered nurse at Texas A&M's A.P. Beutel Health Center, then underwent two mastectomies and six months of chemotherapy treatments, but she attests that she could have faced far worse consequences if she didn't know what to look for.

"I really encourage women to do monthly self-examinations and have mammograms once a year," White said. "The earlier you find breast cancer, the less severe the treatment is and the easier it is to get rid of."

And more women are willing to get mammograms today than when White got hers. According to a random survey taken by political scientists at A&M for the Texas division of the American Cancer Society, eleven percent more

women say they hear more about breast cancer today than they did a year ago.

A major purpose of this survey was to determine to what extent cancer society programs increased awareness of breast cancer and to encourage the use of mammograms.

It was revealed in the random survey, conducted last April, that the number of women who think there is a risk associated with mammograms has decreased by 10 percent compared to last year. Also, there has been a shift in the reasons women give for not having mammograms.

One of these reasons is that women now realize they can't just rely on regular doctor visits. They also are more aware that they can have mammograms without a doctor's recommendation and that mammograms are necessary even when a problem doesn't exist.

The poll also showed 20 percent fewer people believe they are afraid of hearing bad news, that mammograms cause radiation damage or that self-examination is sufficient.

It is important for a woman to have a mammogram once a year and to do a self-examination of her breasts once a month, White said.

White found the lumps in her breast during self-examination, waited four weeks and checked for them again, she said. When she found the lumps to still be tender, she went to a doctor, who in turn sent her to a surgeon who had her get a mammogram that afternoon, she said.

The lumps were removed four days later and tests showed they were malignant.

"When I found the lumps I really didn't think they were going to be cancerous," White said. "I just didn't expect it. I was really surprised to find out the lumps were malignant when I woke up after my surgery."

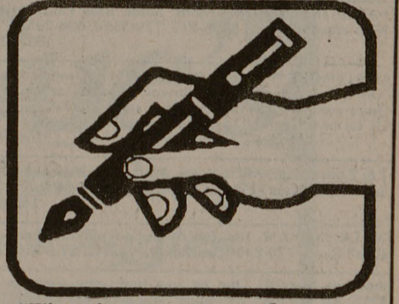
"Some women find lumps and then, not knowing what may happen, they put it off and the results worsen."

White was taken into surgery the next day for a modified radical mastectomy on her left breast. In a modified radical mastectomy, lymph nodes in the surrounding area along with the breast tissue are removed.

Two weeks later, she had a simple mastectomy done on her right breast. Only the breast tissue is removed in a simple mastectomy.

# English professors offer mini-courses to enhance writing

By Pam Tragger  
*Reporter*



Beginning the second week in September, students, faculty and community members can again participate in a program designed to improve their writing abilities.

Writing Outreach is a series of mini-courses designed to develop or enhance writing skills, says Cindy Stevenson, English lecturer and assistant to the director of freshman English.

The sessions will be taught by about 20 instructors and professors in the English department, Stevenson says.

The instructors and professors will choose the discussion topic and at what point in the semester they want to teach the topic, she says. The sessions will begin at 6:30 p.m. in 120 Blocker. Three or four topics will be discussed each week.

The sessions will be two-hour workshops, Stevenson says. These sessions will cover expressive essays, résumés and letters of application and rules of editing. The workshops will give students hands-on experience, Stevenson says, since an hour of practice will accompany an hour-long lecture.

Toward the middle of the semester, the classes will be one-hour sessions focusing on narrower topics such as eliminating wordiness in writing, she says.

Although Writing Outreach has been offered for several years, low attendance is one of its biggest problems because people don't know it's offered, Stevenson says. To change this, handouts will be distributed throughout the community.

Stevenson says she is trying to put a Writing Outreach handout in the packets distributed at Fish Camp.

"There's no reason for students to feel like they can't get help," she says.

At the end of each course, students will be asked to evaluate the class and what they've learned from it, she says.

"Usually, though, we have an excellent evaluation at the end," she says.

No credit is given for the classes, and the students pay no fees to attend, she says.

"The people who come want to come," she says. "They're not forced to come."

Some classes will require participants to bring work to class, such as the course in writing a résumé and a letter of application. This allows the teacher to help the student on an individual basis, Stevenson says.

Other classes are directed to freshman English students, such as the class in expressive and persuasive essays, she says. These mini-courses will help students learn the concepts involved in writing, she says.

"This is not a tutoring service," Stevenson says. "They can't bring their papers and expect the instructor to help them with their (English) 103 paper."

And the programs aren't just for freshmen or students in English classes, she says.

"Writing Outreach should be for anyone who needs help in writing," Stevenson says.

# Students may enhance writing skills in career choice with A&M program

By Jeannette Nicholson  
*Reporter*

A Texas A&M student interested in writing may be able to make a career of it without having to work in a newsroom or publishing house. In fact, the skill could be custom-fit to the profession of the student's choice.

Two A&M English professors, Craig Cowen and David Stewart, developed the Writing Specialization program in 1977 to give students with a flare for writing a chance to enhance and improve their abilities.

Cowen and Stewart recognized the growing demand for highly skilled and competent writers in business, industry and government.

and said they felt a student trained in communication skills would have a vastly better chance at job oppor-

*A student can . . . create a specific-interest curriculum.*

— Sam Dragga, program coordinator

tunities than someone without such skills.

Currently, about 100 students are enrolled in the program each semester, says Sam Dragga, assistant professor of English and program coordinator. The program

has met with general success, he says.

Students in the program must take at least 18 hours of coursework that should provide intensive training in communication skills. A grade of a "B" must be achieved in all such coursework before the student can receive a certificate signifying successful completion.

The program's four mandatory core classes are English 210, English 301, English 320 and Speech and Communication 404. These courses provide a broad range of training in communication skills ranging from argumentation to technical writing.

The remaining six hours are chosen from supporting courses, usually in the student's major.

Dragga says 25 percent of the classes in any major are usually made up of some kind of training classes in any major are usually made up of some kind of training in communication skills. Thus, a student can choose from about 50 different courses and is therefore able to create a specific-interest curriculum.

No special funds were needed to develop and promote the Writing Specialization, Dragga says, since all coursework has been provided through the existing curriculum.

Dragga says students generally are first exposed to the program through their English 104 instructors, which serves as an effective way to "snatch" the better writers early on.

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0.59	930.00	1800.00
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