

Experts respond to report on sex for over-50s

United Press International

Cupid didn't overlook the over-the-hill crowd when aiming his arrows, experts on aging and sex claim — nevermind that young lovers may find that hard to believe.

Authorities were interviewed to see if their views about love and sex after 50 were in step with a new Consumers Union report on love life from 4,246 men and women aged 50 to 93.

The majority of respondents — married or unmarried, male or female — lead happy and sexually active lives, says the report, "Love, Sex and Aging" (Little, Brown, \$19.95).

Some respondents claimed that while frequency and passion had diminished somewhat, the overall quality of sex had improved.

Dr. Mary Calderone, 79, a world-famous sex educator and crusader for the responsible use of sex, said, "It's safe to say sex is there for those who wish it — some do and some don't. But it is there and available in some form, ranging from simple touching or contact to intercourse."

At Syracuse University, Dr. Sol Gordon, another sex educator, also was asked if over 50 is over the hill. "I'm 60 and the answer is oh, no," Gordon said. "In every relationship, the main thing to keep in mind is that sex is not the most important thing. Some people think that if they are not sexually active or have a reduced interest in sex they must be sick."

"It is not a disease to have love without sex as the main thing. We shouldn't connect sex to love. It is important not to define love in terms of sex."

What older people get passionate about varies, just as it does among younger people, said Gordon, director of the Syracuse University Institute for Family Research and Education. "I know a couple whose main passion is square dancing," he said. "And there are others who want most of all to golf together."

Dr. Robert A. Butler, former director of the National Institute on Aging and head of the

Dr. Mary Calderone, 79, a world-famous sex educator and crusader for the responsible use of sex, said, "It's safe to say sex is there for those who wish it — some do and some don't. But it is there and available in some form, ranging from simple touching or contact to intercourse."

"The report is a panorama of how life can be for people 50 and over."

He said it shows how life can be, not what it is for all.

Sexual activity as women and men age is not the same as young love. Brecher said obesity, arthritis and other physical changes make a difference.

"But hundreds have told us they have found ways despite the physiological changes," he said.

At Syracuse University, Dr. Sol Gordon, another sex educator, also was asked if over 50 is over the hill.

"I'm 60 and the answer is oh, no," Gordon said.

"In every relationship, the main thing to keep in mind is that sex is not the most important thing. Some people think that if they are not sexually active or have a reduced interest in sex they must be sick."

"It is not a disease to have love without sex as the main thing. We shouldn't connect sex to love. It is important not to define love in terms of sex."

What older people get passionate about varies, just as it does among younger people, said Gordon, director of the Syracuse University Institute for Family Research and Education.

"I know a couple whose main passion is square dancing," he said. "And there are others who want most of all to golf together."

Dr. Robert A. Butler, former director of the National Institute on Aging and head of the

ual activity of older persons, Butler said. "Most had no sex education in medical school," he said.

As more doctors become authoritative about sexual activity after age 50, Butler said, he expects elderly patients to receive more competent counseling from their physicians about sex.

Butler and his wife, Myrna Lewis, a specialist in older women's health on the medical school faculty, are working on a revision of their book, "Love and Sex After Sixty" (Harper & Row). Lewis said there have been some technological advances since it was written eight years ago.

"There are new ways of detecting the physiological basis of impotence," she said. "And there are new thoughts, a more conservative approach, about using estrogen."

"Older men and older women have different obstacles to overcome when it comes to sexual activity," she said.

"Society equates a young face with sexual attractiveness. The aging face has wrinkles and the stereotype holds that the woman with an that kind of face is over the hill."

The council said it "supports the right of older persons to engage in sexual activity if they so wish and deprecates institutional arrangements which prohibit or discourage such activity."

With older men, Lewis said, performance very gradually slows down.

"A lot of men who are not informed about this gradual slowing down feel incompetent when compared to the 18-year-old."

Barbara Whitney, head of the Sex Information and Education Council, said the stereotype of a sexually-inactive older population has led to problems in some nursing homes and other institutions with elderly populations. Administrators often try to en-

force segregation according to sex.

To help people involved overcome such problems, and for the benefit of the elderly generally, Whitney said the council's board recently approved a position statement on sexuality and aging.

It "notes with approval the increased general understanding that sexual expression and desire very often continues throughout the life cycle. The available evidence indicates, however, a need for continued education of both professionals and non-professionals concerning the sexual feelings, attitudes, sensitivities of older men and women."

The council said it "supports the right of older persons to engage in sexual activity if they so wish and deprecates institutional arrangements which prohibit or discourage such activity."

AUTO INSURANCE FOR AGGIES
Call: George Webb
Farmers Insurance Group
3400 S. College 823 8051

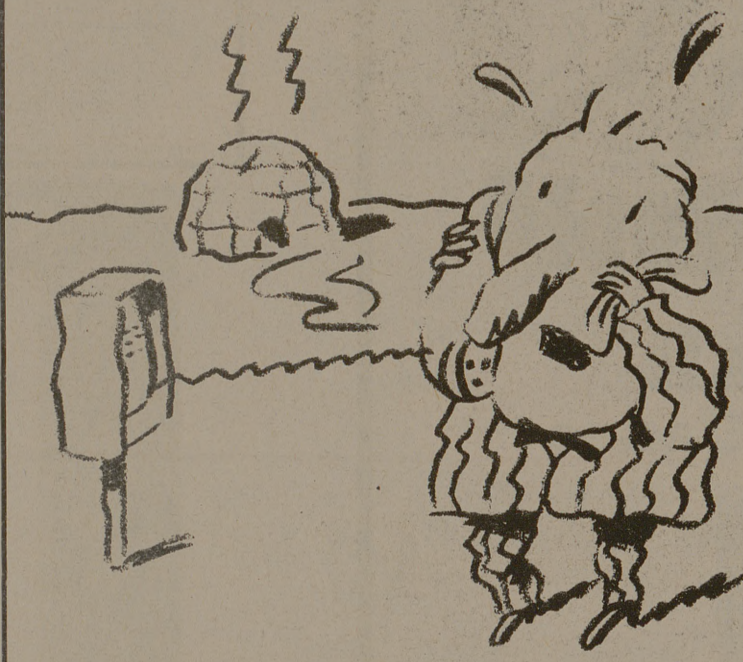
Twisties
All colors and types at lowest price

Fossil - \$1.95
Kay & Co. 846-5816

"Now honey, before you say anything, I want to tell you why I stood you up last night. You see, I'm in Alaska. Now I'm sure you're thinking—just what is an air conditioning salesman doing in Alaska in the dead of winter, so I'm going to tell you—honeybun, they are having one heck of a heat wave up here! You could fry eggs on these igloos, no kidding! So how could I stand idly by and let these poor perspiring Eskimos trade their muk-luks for bikinis?"

"Sweetheart, forget the hurt, forget the 70 bucks you blew on the formal, just tell me you forgive me!"

"Earline, this is Dwayne!"



"Hello?"

"Roger, is that you?"

"Dwayne? I don't know any Dwayne! Say, who is this anyway?"



What should a haircut cost?
\$40? \$20? \$12?
At Supercuts they're always

\$8

Supercuts

Skagg's Shopping Center
846-0084

© 1979 (Rev. 1982) EMRA Corporation
Shampoo and blowdry are available at additional cost.

StarTel can make long explanations seem a lot more "reasonable."

Because Star Tel can offer you a minimum savings of 20% and a maximum savings of 50% off AT&T's long distance rates. Better yet, if you're a residential user, we can offer you something other long distance services can't: a choice. Our Residential Part-Time Service comes with a \$5 monthly code charge and gives you Star Tel's lower rates from 5:00 pm to 8:00 am weekdays, plus all day weekends and holidays. And our Residential Full-Time Service comes with a \$10 code charge and gives you Star Tel savings round-the-clock.

But the good news doesn't stop here. With Star Tel, there's no hook-up fee, no minimum monthly usage and no time limit on calls. We offer you the phone conversation quality of AT&T's 1-Plus calls and we itemize our bills for easier accounting. And since we're locally owned and operated, we can offer you the kind of attentive, personalized service that you deserve—and so seldom get.

So if saving money rings a bell, call Star Tel at 779-2830. Our great rates will make even the craziest explanation seem a lot more "reasonable."

If saving money rings a bell, call 779-2830 for StarTel.

