4-THE CAROLINA TIMES-SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 1982

### Happiness Through Health A Theory On Alcohol **And Sex**

By Otto McClarrin

It is a paradox familiar both to Shakespeare and uncounted college men — that alcohol simultaneously hones the edge of sexual desire and blunts its effect.

An intricate series of experiments at Belmont's An intricate series of experiments at Belmont's McLean Hospital suggests an explanation for this phenomenon, which the porter in Macbeth described in this way: "the performance; therefore much drink may be said to be an equivocator with lechery; it makes him and it mars him; it sets him and it takes him off; it persuades him and disheartens him; makes him stand to and not stand

The McLean experiments suggest that liquor's effects on arousal are no mere matter of uncorking inhibitions, but rather an intricate chain of events involving several parts of the hormonal system that governs men's sexual performance.

The experiments were undertaken to clarify the effect of alcohol on two hormones that play vital roles in sexual arousal and potency - testosterone and luteinizing hormone.

What they found was that a stiff belt, in this case of vodka, would regularly drive down the level of testosterone - which could explain temporary impotency. In a chain reaction, the alcohol would also produce a surge of luteinizing hormones. And that surge, other studies have indicated, could account for those unprompted feelings of sexual desire.

This "back door" form of arousal would explain the confusing sexual state described by the porter in Macbeth.

According to Dr. Jack H. Mendelson, of the McLean-Harvard Research Center, several earlier studies had shown that alcohol lowers the level of testoterone, on a long-term basis in chronic alcoholics and for short periods in the occasional drinker.

Testosterone, which begins to be produced by the male testes in large quantities at puberty, is the hormone that generates most secondary sexual characteristics. It also controls sexual potency.

The earlier studies have not gone unchallenged, however, and Mendelson and his colleagues tried to sort out the facts. The researchers enlisted sixteen male volunteers in the 20's with no record of alcohol or drug abuse. They placed small catheters into an arm vein in each to permit frequent blood sampling. They then took samples every twenty minutes for six hours, starting one hour before the volunteers had their drink — about four shots' worth of 100 proof vodka and juice — and continuing for five hours afterward.

The found that as the alcohol entered the bloodstream, peaking nearly two hours after the drink was finished, the level of testosterone in the

blood dropped steadily. Mendelson believes that the alcohol, enough to leave the volunteers in a state of "mild to moderate inebriation", does not affect the central mechanism it may speed up the breakdown of testosterone in the liver or block a chemical used to produce it in

Although the level of luteinizing hormone showed no change at first, the researchers found, it suddenly surged when the level of testosterone dropped to its lowest point.

Luteinizing hormone, produced by the pituitary or "master gland" at the base of the brain, is a messenger hormone that tells the testes when to produce testosterone.

Scientists believe that when an erotic experience sets off normal sexual arousal, the brain send the pituitary a chemical signal, and the pituitary in turn send a dose of luteinizing hormone to the testes. They then churn out testosterone to produce an

erection. Mendelson speculates that when alcohol lowers the level of testosterone, this triggers a "feedback" signal to the pituitary telling it to shoot out more luteinizing hormone, which get the testes to replace the lost testosterone. It now appears, said Mendelson, that "receptors" in the brain also sense the increased flow of luteinizing hormone, and the result is a sense of sexual desire entirely independent of any "outside" erotic stimulus.



Links Honor Senior Citizens

National Trends and Services Committee of the Durham Chapter of Links sponsored a birthday party on April 6, honoring Senior Citizens at the St. Theresa Community Center on South Roxboro Street.

Prior to the celebration, everyone participated in a voter education program. Mrs. Elna Spaulding, a Durham County Commissioner and also a member of Links, spoke on the importance of voting and provided many answers about Durham County politics during a question-answer period. In addition to the members of the committee - Mesdames Patsy Perry,

chairman; Martha Dooms, Rebecca Edmonds, Elna Spaulding and Lottie Whiting — Mrs. Edna Ballard, coordinator of the center, and Mrs. Eula W. Harris and Mrs. Lelia Miller, guests, shared this memorable event with the St. Theresa Senior Citizens.

From left to right are: Mrs. Lillie Lennon, Mrs. Verness Cotton, Wilbert Mininall, Mrs. Mabel Mabry, Rev. L.S. Thompson, Mrs. Iley Gooden, Mrs. Otelia Becton, Willie Mitchell, Mrs. Pauline Petteway, C.G. Mabry, Ben Hopkins and Rev. Gerald Ewing.

#### **Durham Baha'is To Observe 20th Anniversary**

Members of the Baha'i Faith will celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the formation of the Baha'i Assembly of the City of Durham on Sunday, April 25 at 3 p.m., at the Edison Johnson Recreation Center, 600 West Murray Avenue.

Dr. Dwight Allen, professor of Arts and Letters at Old Dominion University and member of the National Ssembly of the Baha'is of the United States, will be guest speaker. The public is invited.

#### Marriage Satisfaction Drops in Middle Years

By CHRIS TIEDEMANN extension food and nutrition N. C. State University

State University. Research indicates a drop

in satisfaction with marriage S. Department of Agriculture during the middle years, says estimates that the number Leo F. Hawkins, extension of health food stores has human development special-ist at North Carolina State grown from about 1,206 in the U.S. in 1968 to 7,500 University.

Gradual deterioration of the relationship was identi-exotic meats, fish, baked fied as the major factor in goods, and homemade pas-the failure of marriage in a tries are also doing a booming study of 138 divorced people in the middle years, Hawkins

Seventy in-depth interviews with divorced men and

the deterioration. Factors included excessive Hinson, extension family domination of the husband; affection and appreciation; heavy involvement with careers; extra-marital involvement and midlife change, the the laundry work; more than specialist says.

#### HEALTH FOOD **POPULAR**

gourmet shops are pros-pering, says Rachel Kinlaw Dr. Hinson said.

specialist at North Carolina

She explains that the U.

Gourmet shops that sell

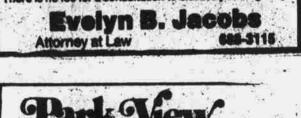
#### TYPE OF HOUSEWORK

women provided insight into that women do 68 percent of what factors brought about the housework in America.

According to Dr. Thelma resource management spefailures to communicate; poor cialist at North Carolina self-esteem; decreasing com- State University, the study panionship; failure to express also showed what type of work men and women do Women do nearly all of

80 percent of meal preparation, meal cleanup, and child care; and 62 percent of shopping.

Health food stores and in work done on home repairs, Men surpassed them only



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LOS ANGELES: Six months old Andrew Singermun, tired and hungry after all of the official ceremony, eats his way through his diploma April 15, as he sits decked out in cap and gown after graduating from the "Baby Power" program at the Education Resource & Service Center. The infant-parenting program is a totally unique prodesigned to demonstrate to parents how they can teach, interact and communications. their infants in a constructive and positive way.