

MICHELLE PAULMAN

Study unravels mystery of sex

Life is like a ... like a ... oh, excuse me. I was thinking about sex.

Don't look so shocked. I wasn't thinking about real sex. I was looking over an article in Monday's issue of Time magazine about sex.

In a study to be published next week, some 3,500 Americans ages 18 to 59 were asked, among other things, how many sexual partners they have had since age 18, how many times in the past year they have had sex and what varieties of sex they preferred.

Now surveys about sex are nothing new; any Playboy or Cosmopolitan reader knows that. But these polls have been skewed because of all the sex fiends who feel the need to brag about their fantasies on a piece of paper.

Until this year, the most recent major attempt to find out just what Americans have been doing in the bedroom was done in the 1940s and '50s by Alfred Kinsey.

Kinsey was a wasp specialist — the connection between wasps and sex is lost on me — who interviewed people in mental wards, boarding houses and prisons about their sex lives.

The Kinsey report makes those magazine surveys look like the Theory of Relativity.

So for the past 40 years, Americans have had to guess if they are getting as much sex as the next person, or if they're enjoying it as much as the person next to them.

Enter Edward Laumann, Robert Michael, Stuart Michaels and John Gagnon — a team of social scientists. They selected households at random. They picked, at random, which people in those households they would interview. Then they discussed sex with these people.

Where was I when all this was happening? I guess I'm just not



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random enough. Because of all this randomness, the study has been hailed as major breakthrough in finding the real sexual pulse of the nation.

For me, the mystery is gone. Warning: Readers who are easily shocked or prone to uncontrollable giggling at mention of the words "boink" or "twiddle" should stop here.

I'd always assumed that everyone around me was getting more sex than I was. That wouldn't be hard — I haven't boinked with a guy for quite some time.

Sure, go ahead and laugh. Actually, not having sex for a year or more is perfectly normal.

According to the study, 32 percent of the women and 23 percent of the men out there are doing — or, I guess, not doing — just that. And another quarter of the population is only doing it a few times a year.

Some of you sex fiends from the fifth paragraph might be asking: "What are they doing — twiddling their thumbs? Or maybe they're twiddling something else? HAR HAR HARDY HAR!"

All right, knock it off. You're wrong again. The study found that people who have sex often are more likely to twiddle than those of us who have forgotten what sex is.

I'm kidding. I couldn't possibly forget what sex is; I'm reminded of

it on every page of my Cosmo. Sex is in television, radio and magazines — everywhere except in our bedrooms.

Compare the study with the steamy media messages in our society and you get the locker-room scenario: We think about and talk about boinking more than we actually boink.

With the spread of AIDS and other assorted diseases — such as babies — thinking and talking about sex aren't such bad ideas after all.

In fact, if we open up our sexual dialogic, maybe we could figure out why 22 percent of women report being forced to do sexual things but only 3 percent of men said they had forced women to do these things, or why 54 percent of men said they think about sex on a daily basis, while only 19 percent of women do.

Until now, sex had simply been left in the dark because no one wanted to talk about it.

This study sheds light on a complex and confusing subject — one that we should think about more often.

No matter how you slice it, life without sex is like ... like ... oh, damn. Sorry.

Paulman is a senior news-editorial and history major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

MICHAEL JUSTICE

Focus on prevention, not cure

Many times I wonder what is going on in this country. Where are our priorities, what happened to responsibility, and when did lunacy become standard?

While reading the paper, I came across yet another story of disrespect for human dignity and life. A woman was sentenced on Friday to a maximum of 70 years in prison for the kidnapping and sexual abuse of two women.

The woman, Wanda Butler, 33, and her husband, Peter, 50, were accused of kidnapping, rape, sexual degradation and beatings in the cases of two Minneapolis women. Peter was not sentenced because he killed himself with a gunshot to the head. It gets worse.

Peter was a convicted murderer who had been paroled from a New York prison. Wanda had worked as a prostitute in Minneapolis, and she may have known the women she abducted, because they also were prostitutes.

I'm not sure if Wanda and Peter were working while they traveled between Sioux City, Iowa, and Minnesota: but he owned a truck with a sleeper cab, which is where they kept the victims bound with plastic garbage bag ties. Amazingly, both women managed to escape to safety.

So now the state of Iowa has to spend \$40,000 or more a year to support Wanda for the next 35 years at least. That comes to \$1.4 million, and that's the low end, a conservative estimate at best. What does society get for all that money spent? My guess is a psychotic woman who will be 68 when she is released. No skills, no money, no home.

She'll either do something to ensure she stays locked up (which costs the taxpayers more money), live in a retirement home and collect welfare and Social Security or become a homeless person. Something is seriously wrong with the way we do things.

I personally don't think a cretin like Wanda deserves that kind of



Our schools are overcrowded and in some cases broke, yet we keep throwing money at the problem by building more prisons and putting more cops on the street. Then we support these criminals for life.

money and attention, but I know someone who does.

A few weeks ago, a 22-year-old woman by the name of Candice Cup from Bloomington, Ind., was arrested after she tried to sell her 7-month-old baby for two cartons of cigarettes and a quart of Budweiser. She told police she proposed the swap because she couldn't take care of the child.

Two cartons of cigarettes and a quart of Budweiser. That comes to less than \$40.

The child is now in foster care, and I hope these people will take better care of the baby than its own mother did.

So why not find a way to spend \$40,000 a year on this child? Educate it; love it; allow it to grow. (I apologize for referring to a child as "it," but the sex of the baby was not released.) To spend that money and time and energy on Wanda would be a great waste. Perhaps by transferring our attention to a newborn, we can prevent fools like Wanda and Peter.

We also could prevent things like the tragedy that occurred in Houston in June of 1993.

Two teen-age girls were savagely raped and murdered when they were on their way home from a pool party and accidentally stumbled upon a gang gathering in the woods. The girls were raped repeatedly, then strangled and finally stomped in the heads with steel-toed boots. The girls were 14-year-old Jennifer Lee Ertman and 16-year-old Elizabeth Pena.

Within the past month, five members of the gang were con-

victed of murder and sentenced to death. Another member, tried as a juvenile because he was 14, was given the maximum sentence of 40 years. He'll probably be out in 20 years or less because of the overcrowded prison system in Texas.

Now the state has to pay for these murderers to live. I can't say the price tag, but I'd be willing to bet it will be more than it would have cost to prevent this sort of thing. If money was spent to educate these kids and give them things to do besides join gangs, this country wouldn't be in such turmoil.

Our schools are overcrowded and in some cases broke, yet we keep throwing money at the problem by building more prisons and putting more cops on the street. Then we support these criminals for life.

If you ever want to know where your tax money is, go down to the Nebraska State Penitentiary. Nebraska certainly isn't as bad as Texas or New York, or most states for that matter, but it won't stay that way. Omaha is no Green Acres, and it isn't getting any smaller. Don't think it can't happen here.

We should all pay more attention to our grandmothers' advice, especially those involved in making legislative decisions:

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Justice is a news-editorial and broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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