

## Aging Lifestyles: Sexy Hirsch celebrates 80 with style

by Joe\_Volz

Ruthe Hirsch of San Rafael, Calif., has just turned 80.

Now, before young cynics ask, "So what's to celebrate? That only means she is another old woman whose best years are in the past," let's take a moment to examine Ruthe's life.

You cynics obviously don't know Ruthe (pronounced "Ruthie").

Let me tell you about her.

Ruthe is no traditional octogenarian. Oh, no.

Not only does she have a lot to celebrate in her past life, she is looking forward to having a lot more fun in the future.

Ruthe is a tall, slender, gorgeous brunette (OK, that's editorializing a bit but this is a commentary column). And, sexy.

Yes, it is proper for a senior citizen to be sexy these days now that the New England Journal of Medicine has weighed in with a landmark report ripping the curtain off of late-life loving.

A new study by the University of Chicago reports that in the last year, 73 percent of adults between 57 and 64 were sexually active and 26 percent between 75 and 85.

Older women were less likely, however, to have active sex lives because they had either outlived their partners or their partners had married younger women. Ruthe could very well star if some TV network, like the new Retirement TV, decided to slay the myths of older sexuality with a show titled, perhaps, "Sex and the Single Senior."

One of the first times I stopped by her kids' house to interview Ruthe - she is quite a vocalist - she came

bouncing down the stairs with her boyfriend for breakfast. Ruthe has been divorced for years and has "children" in their 40s and 50s.

"My son may be shocked out his gourd," said Ruthe, who was visiting his family in Anaheim, Calif., for the weekend. "He is really uncomfortable. Grandma isn't supposed to be having a sexual affair."

But to Hirsch, it was the most natural thing in the world. She has no intention of hiding that reality from her son and his children. She is a very sexually active grandmother.

And she doesn't mind talking about it - overcoming a taboo that stymies so many older women, who often give the mistaken impression that they are no longer interested in sex. After all, women of a certain age who grew up during the Depression were told that polite women didn't talk about sex. That was a topic left to "dirty old men."

Says Ruthe, "People don't lose their passion. They do not lose wanting to be held, to be touched, having physical contact with another human being."

Ruthe utilizes new technology, which wasn't around when she started dating back in Pittsburgh 60 years ago - the computer. She met a Connecticut businessman on the Internet and pursued that.

"I got on a 50-plus chat line," she says. "We were really getting to know each other. We exchanged photos. How will that turn out? Time will tell."

Ruthe concedes there are problems. She may not be as young as some of the women in the dating field but she is far more interesting. So, she says to men seeking trophy girlfriends, "you are most welcome to look somewhere else." She doesn't want a man trying to be 21 again.

Ruthe has been singing with her band, Ruthe Hirsch Productions in the San Francisco Bay area, for decades and will continue to do so. Senior groups come from all over California to listen to Ruthe belt out golden oldies in a Cabaret review over lunch.

Ruthe's torch songs are sung with particular meaning. She has been in love before, young lovers. And, she very well may be again.

So happy birthday, Ruthe.

Sorry I missed the big birthday but I will be at the next one, particularly if you sing that song - how does it go - "Fairy tales can come true if you're really young at heart."

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