



Carry on working and never retire

That's Peter Carvell's advice in his new book. **Carmel Thomason** talks to him and actress Marianne Morley who loves working in her seventies

IMAGINE a world where no one retires and everyone carries on working.

It may be a nightmare to many, but author Peter Carvell argues, in his new book, that it could be the best way to live.

And with the new age discrimination laws, it may be possible to do just that, as it is now unlawful to discriminate against workers under the age of 65 on the grounds of age. Workers also have the right to request that they work beyond 65, making us all re-evaluate our traditional view of retirement.

In his new book, *Silver Wolf: The Guide To The Third Act Of Your Life*, Carvell says we should never retire completely.

He says fiftysomethings should be thinking about creating a plan for what he calls "the third act of your life", which includes keeping fit and getting your priorities right by making a better balance of your life with work, learning and play.

The former UN consultant and magazine publisher says: "Never say the R word. I don't think that retirement, in the way that our parents just stepped out of life, makes any sense today.

"Retirement was possible when it was only for a few years – when you worked to 65 and died, on average, at 69.

"But we live in a very different world now. Many people are often retired by 57 and then can expect to live at least 20 more good years. You can't retire for 20 years – that's nonsense."

But does he mean we should give up our dreams of being free from the office and be chained to our desks for eternity?

"No, of course not. My book is all about following your dreams, but for most of us work is a part of that," he explains.

"Work less, far less, by all means. Work at a different job and work with different people if that's what you want. Stay with the old company but on a different basis if you prefer. But never stop working completely.

"Work is good for us. We are, by nature, working creatures – without work, play becomes work.

'I'M LUCKY BECAUSE THEY ALWAYS NEED OLD ACTORS'



CARRIE ON Marianne Morley plays Miss Carrie in *Vieux Carré* at The Library Theatre. She says: 'Think of me, an old lady, 70 plus, being with these brilliant young actors.'

PERFORMERS of all kinds are already way ahead of everyone else in shrugging off any traditional view of retirement.

Marianne Morley decided she wanted to be an actress when she was just 14. Encouraged by her English teacher, she went on to train at Bristol Old Vic theatre school and now, more than a decade after most of her contemporaries have retired, she's still as enthusiastic about her craft.

"I'm lucky because they always need old actors," she laughs. "The parts aren't as

many but then again I enjoy working, although I wouldn't want to work as much as I did when I was younger."

Marianne is currently appearing in *Vieux Carré*, a rarely seen Tennessee Williams play.

She says: "The character I play, Miss Carrie, is total magic, I adore her. I love being able to be someone else.

"Also, young people are so kind to old actors because they want to gain from our experience – to know what it was like to work with Sir John Gielgud or Dame Peggy Ashcroft. And think

"I have a friend who thought that stopping work in his fifties meant he could play golf every day. After six months, going to the golf course became worse than going to the office. So, he started another company where he could work three days a week.

"Most of us will probably have to continue to do some work for purely financial reasons.

"Our pensions have failed to perform; the state pension is a joke, so we have to go on earning. "There is a belief that retirement is a happy time and that

most people want to retire. Both of these beliefs are simply wrong for most people. It's true that at 40 most people think they want to retire early, but by 55 they know that they don't want to retire and are certainly aware that retirement doesn't bring happiness.

"The Age Discrimination Act will make huge changes, just as the Sex Discrimination and the Race Discrimination Acts did, but the changes will come gradually.

"We need to get out of our

of me, an old lady, 70 plus, being with these brilliant young actors who make me laugh and laugh, like Catherine Tate. We played tarts together in *The Way Of The World*.

"And when I'm not doing this I work in the National Missing Persons charity shop – it's great fun."

» **Vieux Carré is at The Library Theatre until November 11. The play contains nudity, scenes of a sexual nature and strong language. For tickets call 0161 236 7110.**

heads any of the old myths about getting older. No single age automatically brings any dramatic change to your mind or body.

"I don't pretend to have all the answers but I know that the 20million people over 60 in this country deserve a society that appreciates their worth, respects their knowledge and welcomes their contribution."

» **Silver Wolf: The Guide To The Third Act Of Your Life by Peter Carvell is published by Delancey at £9.99**

Diane Cooke



A ban on ageist birthday cards is ridiculous

THE image on the birthday card was of a bad-tempered old woman, standing at the door, arms folded, looking down on her petrified partner busily sticking sex toys on the wall in a neat line.

The caption read: "No! I said I wanted a dado rail."

It made me snigger like a wheezy pensioner. Now, apparently, that card would be fine to send to a colleague on his or her birthday as there were no references to age and therefore no threat of ageism.

If, however, the card had shown antiques expert David Dickinson chirruping: "Another birthday? Don't worry you're not OLD, until you start going to antique shows." Pretty lame, I know. Nevertheless all hell could have been let loose.

For, under employment laws which came into force this month, staff can take legal action if they feel they have been harassed or victimised about their age.

An employment law expert, Neil Gouldson, says: "Jokes in birthday cards about being 'coffin dodgers' and so on will need to be curbed. Employers must tackle prejudices within the workplace if they are to avoid substantial claims."

Some companies have already decided that birthday cards which make light-hearted references to being "over the hill" pose an unacceptable risk. Of what? Telling the truth or causing a heart attack? Well sue me because this column is about to get very dangerous.

If ever there was evidence of political correctness needing a nappy change, this is it.

Did I get offended when I received a hand-made birthday card from my colleagues with my ageing head superimposed on Claudia Schiffer's bikini-clad body? No, I cut it out and stuck it on the fridge for inspiration. But neither did I get my wig off about references to me sleeping with an entire football team.

Which makes me wonder if it

works the other way. Will our civil courts become clogged with the senders of 18th birthday cards saying, "young, free and still really, really stupid." Probably not, but then being young isn't a crime is it?

My brother-in-law still treasures the card I made for his 50th birthday which showed his head on the body of a woman wearing leopard skin tights and stilettos. I also penned a verse containing references to a penchant for cross-dressing and the rest was dedicated to his rampant alcoholism. He loved it. In fact he's been carrying it around in his briefcase for 10 years, silly old goat.

The point is, I could have said that he was a decrepit,

one-foot-in-the-grave, wrinkly, old fogey with a penchant for cross-dressing and heavy drinking and he'd have loved it even more. But the fact that it came from a member of the family and not a colleague seems to make a world of difference.

But what about fun and laughter? Old folks love laughing at themselves and the older they get the more they brag about their age. I used to drag my gran away from the young butchers at Tesco because every time she told them she was 95 she got a free half pound of mince for her cat.

Well, this ridiculous law won't stop me sending birthday cards to female colleagues showing pictures of saggy necked turkeys with the caption, "without Botox you're stuffed".

In fact, it could be the start of a whole underground movement. Non PC-cards delivered anonymously by grannies in balaclavas to hidey holes behind the cisterns in the works loo. The possibilities are endless. It will keep the old folks occupied until they die laughing in the face of political correctness.

Now after me: "Happy Birthday to you, you're old and you're through. You look like you're 90, and not 22..."

"This law won't stop me sending cards showing turkeys with the caption, without Botox you're stuffed"