



# BROOKLYN\_BORN

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## Womanly or manly pursuits - how do we spend our time?

Tuesday, March 19, 2013

Today I salute all the women AND men with the courage to be themselves.

A comment on my blog Saturday prompted today's thoughts. When she mentioned "womanly pursuits," we all pretty much understood which activities she meant, even before she listed her favorites.

I'm good at some traditional things. I'm a great and very creative seamstress, with or without a pattern. Look, I was once a mermaid



I made a set of these for a community theater production. They looked really good from the audience with stage lighting.

Unfortunately, I didn't have a lot of talent in the kitchen and cleaning was just a necessity. The Board of Health would never come calling, but neither would House Beautiful magazine either.

During my years as a SAHM, I was determined to learn the other womanly arts, usually from printed instructions. I learned to knit and crochet, do needlepoint and even crewel. Here's a coat and hat I knitted for my daughter.

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I had a lot of company in these traditional activities and I did enjoy them. We even had a club. But when I registered for a local Labor Day bike race, I realized that it was for men only. They let me enter and I didn't do very well, but it was a start. Within a few years there were events for both men and women.

Both women and men have a stake in combating stereotypes. There's nothing wrong with being a SAHM or pursuing traditional womanly activities. Unfortunately, stay at home Dads don't even get their own acronym. It was quite a shock when NFL star Rosey Greir admitted to doing needlepoint. Of course he was big enough that no one was likely to laugh at him.

I really appreciate the men who when spending time at home with their own children realize that they are not "babysitting."

I wonder how long it will take for society to give both men and women the freedom to be themselves.

Since I was going through old photos anyway, I decided to include these results of my sewing activities





I could be a “woman of the evening” or a proper Amish mother. I may have been following a traditional path in my real life, but onstage many extremes were possible.

Edit:

I understand StoneCot’s comment and agree that women can be harsh critics of those who haven’t chosen the same path as they have. However, my concern here is with a society that once separated jobs in want ads by gender and officially excluded women from activities deemed too physically demanding – like the marathon. I assume that men who wanted to pursue a Nursing career would have and perhaps still face the same type of obstacles.

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## Member Comments About This Blog Post



**CELIAMINER**

Somehow I've been missing the links to your blogs the last few days. I have some catching up to do. Love your seamstress ability! My mother used to sew for my brother and me out of economic necessity, and I learned the basics of making my own clothes in middle and high school, but I'm just as glad that I don't have to sew to remain clad.

3006 days ago



**JAHINTZY**

Excellent blog, thank you!

3007 days ago



**CAROLCRC**

We'll know we've achieved nirvana when both sexes can do whatever interests them without censure from anyone with a stereotype to enforce.

I remember in graduate school being accused of "setting the woman's movement back" by doing cross-stitch (too traditionally female). I retorted that if the woman's movement meant anything, it should mean I could do what I wanted and enjoyed without gender being an issue.

3008 days ago



**BOILHAM**

I believe the best qualified person for the job should be hired, regardless of gender. Especially when it comes to jobs where lives are at stake. However, my position would label me as a sexist in many cases.

Your blogs certainly are thought provoking. I particularly enjoyed AUSFAMS reply.

3008 days ago



**SLENDERELLA61**

Enjoyed your blog. Appreciate your seamstress skills and agree with your call to unlimited opportunities for all. Glad to report my son in law is a great parent and would never say he is babysitting!!

3008 days ago





**HELEN\_BRU**

Hm, I met Rosey Greir one time, so I know what you mean!!!!  
3008 days ago



**STRIVERONE**

I really enjoy that in addition to physical exercise and nutrition, you address societal fitness issues in so many of your SparkBlog entries. From all the intelligent responses you receive, it's apparent that I'm in excellent company in appreciating this.  
3009 days ago



**SUZYSMOBILE**

I am in awe! Sewing machines and I do NOT get along. Winding the bobbin thwarts me every time. Mrs. Maenche, my 7th grade sewing teacher, gave up on me early in the school year.  
3009 days ago



**CD8634484**

It's not society that won't allow people to be themselves, it's other people! And the hardest of them all on women that don't toe whatever is the line at that time, or in that place, is other women! They often seem to get bitter and twisted as they get older, and delight in gossiping and trashing peoples lives and reputations.  
3009 days ago



**SLIMMERJESSE**

Great photos! Thanks for sharing them.  
3009 days ago



**WILSONWR**

Although you are by no means a "traditionalist," you are a pretty good seamstress! You get to go "wild" on your wardrobes and have fun acting out such different roles in the theater! You are amazing.

Just to let you know, I've often wished I could sew a little - not for making outfits, but for repairing many of the outdoor things (like tarps and tents) that always seem to get a tear in them. My "needle and thread" repairs aren't too pretty...  
3009 days ago



**AUSFAM**

I must have grown up with amazing parents because my brother and I have always known that we could do and be whatever we wanted to--there was a gender line and we were aware of it but we were always encouraged to do what makes us happy and ignore the stigma. My mom taught both of us to cook, clean, sew, arrange flowers, etc. and my dad made us both learn how to maintain our cars, taught us to hunt and fish, etc. AND although each one was the primary instructor for the aforementioned activities, they each made sure that my brother and I helped them both on all of the activities. Meaning, my dad sewed, cooked, and cleaned with us, my mom changed the oil, hunted and fished with us--often one was better at the activity than the other; however, they each participated in all activities, no matter the gender stigma.

My husband and I raise my daughters in much the same way. Although they're both small (under the age of 3), they wear both boy and girl colors, ride in tractors, play in the dirt, cook, help with laundry, etc. with both of us. We encourage them to enjoy the exploration of the world and learning, not focus on what a girl vs. boy is supposed to do.

I applaud the men in my life as much as the women for making me who I am today.  
3009 days ago



**PMRUNNER**

A good friend used to have to leave early to go home and do some "baby sitting". Until we reminded him that when they are your own kids, it is called "parenting", and that men can do it too!

Love the mermaid picture! Too funny.  
3009 days ago



**COCK-ROBIN**

Looks great!  
3009 days ago



**NELLJONES**

I love the term "womanly arts". We don't hear that much anymore.  
3009 days ago



**MISCHAKEO**

You are quite the seamstress. What fun you had sewing for the stage. I was a stay at home mom with a husband who was around a lot as he is a farmer. I loved being with my kids, I worked for 12 years before having kids, Now I am back at work, we have many roles in this life of ours...male and female.



Interesting blog., I loved your reflections and pictures.  
3009 days ago



**WATERMELLEN**



Love this blog! I was (hard to believe now) winner of the Grade Nine Home Economics prize and sewed most of my own wardrobe through highschool. Used to do the "formal dinner party" thing. The "party for 50" thing. The home decor thing: wallpapering and painting and . . . the gardening thing.

Was also a SAHM for 6 years, loved pretty every minute. Sewed costumes, many kids' parties (birthday and otherwise), kids' crafts, cookie-baking: all of it.

And I'm persistently and distinctly "girly girl".

And yet: a pretty rabid feminist too! And no, these aren't inconsistent, not at all!!  
3009 days ago



**NANNABLACK**



**AWESOME**

3009 days ago



**YMWONG22**



Bravo! Cute outfits. Quite an accomplishment. We should not hesitate to be who we are or even who we have the potential to be.

**AWESOME** 🥳 🙌

3009 days ago

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