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French Country Cooking

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**Treat Yourself to an
Around the Table
Chef's Apron**

Contact Susan Nye at
susannye@tds.net
or 603/526 7319

More information the web at
www.susannye.com

March is Women's History Month, a time to celebrate women and their many accomplishments. I developed an interest in women's history and feminism early, when I was just a teenager. It started when we read *The Feminine Mystique* in humanities class. It made most of the class pretty nervous. We lived in a conservative suburb and life had a certain order to it. Men went out and worked. Women stayed home and took care of the family. As much as teenagers may want to rebel, they are a pretty conservative bunch. Embracing new technologies is no big deal but social change is something else.

So why my interest? Impressionable and idealistic teenager that I was, I thought life should be fair. Learning, among other things, that women earned 57 cents to a man's dollar was an eye-opener. The idea that being a girl could somehow impose limits, well I was appalled, baffled and befuddled.

In spite of or maybe because of all that I eventually went to work for a big computer company. There were few women managers and more often than not, mine was the only skirt in the room. There were a couple of other women around, we'd meet for coffee, grumble that we worked twice as hard to get half as far and then go back to work. After a while, a few quit and then a few more.

Suddenly (or at least it seemed sudden) my company and companies like it, began to pay attention to the grumbling. The reason was simple; when women quit they took their talents, their unpaid overtime and customers with them. Oops!

In response to this exodus companies began to talk, not about equality but about diversity. Hiring and promoting women took on a new importance. Equality and fairness were not at issue. Women were simply good for business and it was time to embrace their talents. Even if they were a little different.

Of course parents have known the truth about boys and girls for, well, forever. They know most children have wonderful, colorful imaginations but boys and girls tend to exhibit them a little differently. Take dress-ups and costumes. All kids like to dress up. A little girl will put on a toy tiara, an old lace nightgown, sample some of mommy's make-up and she is transformed into a fairy princess. Boys, on the other hand, tie a bath towel around their neck and jump off the garage roof.

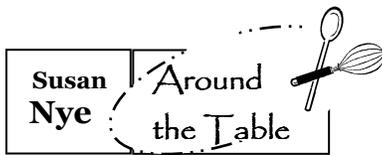
Children are great collectors. When they were small, my nieces collected at least a thousand Barbie dolls, even more sparkly outfits and a pink convertible. The girls played with those leggy beauties for hours. Sometimes the dolls got into complicated and indecipherable arguments. In the end everyone was all smiles but no one is really sure if or how these squabbles were resolved.

Now my nephews, they collected a ton of Legos. They played for hours, building spaceships, race cars and construction sites. Any disputes between extraterrestrials, drivers or guys on the site were solved simply and easily with mass destruction.

Children seem to have a slightly different view of nature. Let's face it, most girls think that worms and lizards are pretty icky and leave them alone. However, most boys think they're cool just because they are icky. They collect them, store them in their pockets and put them in the dryer to see if they'll get dizzy.

And finally there are rumors that boys are better or at least more adventurous cooks. Maybe the rumors are true, you never hear about a girl trying to make Jell-O in the swimming pool. Celebrate diversity this month with your favorite girls and boys.

Bon appétit! - Susan



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Apron

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Swimming Pool Jell-O

I confess. I have never made Swimming Pool Jell-O. In fact, I've never even been tempted.

Maybe it's just a guy thing.

Makes 800,000 servings

12,500 gallons boiling water

200,000 (3 ounce) packages Jell-O in the flavor(s) of your choice

12,500 gallons cold water

1. On a cold night, put boiling water into a 25,000 gallon swimming pool.
2. Add the Jell-O. Stir until dissolved.
3. Add 12,500 gallons of cold water.
4. Chill until it wiggles.

Please note: pool filters do not like Jell-O.

Another note: no matter how much Jell-O you add to the pool you will not be able to walk on water.

One final note: this recipe has not been tested. No matter how much you are tempted, I do not recommend that you try to make Jell-O in your swimming pool (or in your neighbor's pool).