

COMMENTARY

'Sex' reunion reveals things have changed

BY ABIGAIL GREEN

Like millions of women across the country, I rushed out to the theater for the premiere of the movie *Sex and the City*. Sarah Jessica Parker and her pals can thank me for their \$55.7 million opening weekend. Apparently, Warner Bros. had aimed for a modest \$30 million and was surprised that women showed up in droves, making up 85 percent of audiences.

I'm not surprised at all. Do you know how long it's been since my friends and I had a girls' night out?

Back in our single days, a group of us met weekly to eat, drink, gossip and watch *Sex and the City*. It took me a while to warm up to the show, truth be told. I'm far from a shopaholic; my closet is filled with Target couture, not top-shelf labels. I live in Baltimore, not the Big Apple. And being a freelance writer, I could never get past the premise that Carrie Bradshaw was a newspaper sex columnist who lived in an amazing Manhattan apartment and splurged on designer shoes. Do you know what newspapers pay? (Hint: not even enough to afford one Jimmy Choo.)

The show was really just an excuse to get together with my girlfriends. In the four years since the series ended, our group — now mostly in our mid-30s — has become so busy with kids, husbands and work that we can't imagine how we ever found the time. So we were all looking forward to a night out together in honor of the movie premiere. One friend even flew cross-country for the event.

But first, there were some logistics that single gals wouldn't need to worry about — for instance, what to wear. Sadly, my wardrobe of stylish evening wear has diminished since I've become a stay-at-home mom. I wear mostly flats these days, and all my purses have to be big enough to hold diapers, toys and snacks.

Then sitters and husbands had to be recruited for baby duty. But we still weren't footloose and fancy-free just yet. Somehow, I don't think Carrie & Co. had to field cell phone calls asking what the kids were supposed to eat and whether it was bath night.

Finally, we made it downtown, got our tickets — reserved well in advance — and piled into the theater. What a vibe. Groups of girlfriends of every age, shape and color filled the lobby. We'd specifically chosen the Landmark Theatre in Harbor East for its hip, urban feel and its bar. What's *Sex and the City* without Cosmopolitans?

I won't reveal anything about the movie except that it far exceeded my expectations. Surprisingly, the trailers didn't give away all the good parts. Now that my social life is less spontaneous than an annual physical, I have to maximize my precious few outings. If I have to hire a sitter, pay for parking and put on makeup, a film better darn well be worth it.

But it has to be a sign of the times that I left the theater not with such thoughts as, "Where did Samantha get that hot lingerie?" but rather, "I wonder what Charlotte does for child care?"

Afterward, we had reservations at a trendy new sushi restaurant. Instead of, "What a cool place!" we all said, "Man, it's loud in here!" At 10 p.m., it was already past most of our bedtimes. We tried to rally, heading to another hot spot for drinks, but the problem with hip cocktail lounges lined with comfy couches is that aging nonhipsters like me start to fall asleep in our drinks. And if you're not used to wearing heels? They hurt after a while.

So maybe my friends and I are not so young and energetic and carefree as we were when *Sex and the City* was in its heyday. And maybe we piled into minivans and headed back to the suburbs at the end of the night, home to our loved ones in flannel boxers and footy pajamas.

I like to think that after decades of dating disasters and decadence, Carrie Bradshaw would trade the contents of her walk-in closet to step into my flat-soled shoes.

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Sarah Jessica Parker stars as Carrie Bradshaw in the new "Sex and the City" movie.

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