

## It's a Man's World

It's a man's world.

Somewhere. But not anyplace near where I usually hang out.

There are about five other couples that LuAnn and I normally socialize with, and the males have it figured out. If you ask all the men the same questions (for example, what are you doing this weekend, what are you wearing to the dinner party, where are you going on vacation), the answer is almost always "I don't know, I haven't been told yet."

Maybe we all accidentally became involved with strong-minded women. I keep recalling a scene from the 1980 movie *Private Benjamin* with Goldie Hawn playing a sheltered housewife/army recruit. One morning her husband yells at the dog to "Sit!" and she immediately and mindlessly drops into a nearby chair. I'm Goldie in this scenario.

Despite my domestic experiences, some of my best friends are women. But they are complex creatures with a scary dark side that you never want to conjure up. Deep inside almost every woman – no matter how refined and caring – I really believe there's a five-star (rhymes with bitch), struggling to get out. No offense.

For many of us (not just women) it's a Jekyll & Hyde existence. For example, LuAnn is a Registered Nurse, and she says that her patients perceive her as an angel of mercy and light. Sometimes it sounds to me like Florence Nightingale and Clara Barton suffer by comparison. When I asked her why this angelic behavior seems to disappear after working hours, she replied, "Well, I used it all up at the hospital." I said, "On people I don't even know?" Doesn't seem fair.

Anyway, I suppose it shouldn't have surprised me that there is evidently a world outside my own estrogen-permeated personal life where women don't seem to get everything they want 24/7. On the contrary, it turns out that the Real World is sadly out of whack in a number of ways with regard to gender equity.

I did a little research in my own profession and discovered that although women make more than 85% of the office products purchases they hold less than 16% of

the leadership roles. There are similarly lopsided ratios in a large number of other industries, which is dismaying considering that women comprise 51 percent of Iowa's population and 57 percent of enrollment in our colleges and universities.

Not surprisingly there are people working to improve the odds, and a notable one is The Iowa Women's Foundation. Based in Iowa City, its mission is to "improve the lives of Iowa women and girls through the power of philanthropy, advocacy and collaboration."

I accidentally attended one of their annual luncheons a couple of years ago (long story) and despite my chromosomal handicap I became convinced that they are doing great work. During the past 15 years, the IWF has awarded over 1/4 of a million dollars to 71 projects in 69 of the 99 Iowa counties.

As it happens, this year's Annual Awards Luncheon is this Friday at noon at the Coralville Marriott Convention Center. Everything you need to know is at [www.iawf.org](http://www.iawf.org). If this is an issue that resonates with you, it's probably not too late to RSVP. Tell them that LuAnn told me to tell you to go.

*Dave Parsons cowers in his office at the business he co-owns on the Coralville strip, fearful that any woman will find anything that he wrote today the tiniest bit offensive.*