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The Future Is Decidedly Female

By **MATT THORNHILL**

Next week in election booths across the United States, more votes will be cast for women than have ever been cast before.

Not by women, for women.

That's because more women across all political parties (including the Tea variety) are running for Congress or statewide office than ever before, according to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University.

While some may say otherwise, we see this as good thing. That's because we are enlightened, trailing edge boomers, part of the group born from 1956 through 1964. We graduated college in the late 1970s and early 1980s and entered the work force during the Reagan years.

By the time we reached young adulthood, the first half of boomer women -- born from 1946 through 1955 -- had already broken through many glass ceilings and were entrenched in middle management. Case in point: My first boss on Madison Avenue in 1982 was a woman, and her boss was a woman, her boss's boss was a woman. In addition, my client at a large packaged goods company was a woman and the top person responsible for the advertising at the client was also a woman.

Certainly a far cry from the Don Draper, male-dominated environment on TV's "Mad Men."

We all know that the Women's Lib movement in the 1970s created new opportunities for college-educated women, and new career paths beyond the traditional "Mommy Track." At the same time, New Age sensibilities took hold of the American male (think Alan Alda) and the slow swing of the pendulum away from male domination picked up momentum.

Jump forward to today when we have women running for governor in 10 states, another 15 running for the U.S. Senate, and 138 for the House of Representatives. Progress isn't even or everywhere: As of the latest Fortune 500 listing, only 15 women are CEOs in the nation's largest corporations. But that figure will change.

In a recent article in The Atlantic called "The End of Men," journalist Hannah Rosin presents a detailed and convincing case that the future belongs to women. The impetus for the piece was that earlier this year women became the majority of the work force for the first time in U.S. history. Most managers are now women, too. And for every two men who get a college degree this year, three women will do the same.

Rosin ponders: "For years, women's progress has been cast as a struggle for equality. But what if equality isn't the end point? What if modern, postindustrial society is simply better suited to women?"

She also notes that "Of the 15 job categories projected to grow the most in the next decade in the U.S., all but two are occupied primarily by women."

This shift to dominance by the sisterhood may have been a really long time coming, but maybe we men have no one to blame but ourselves. In a new book, *Is There Anything Good About Men*, author Roy Baumeister makes the case that men have been "exploited" by the very cultures they created. He points out that men are more expendable than women and form the bulk of wartime casualties, suffer more work-related deaths, and die, on average, at younger ages than women. In a Darwinian twist, the very survival of the species required men to make themselves more expendable than women.

It's hard to say if the end of men is really on the horizon, but we agree that the future belongs to those blessed with the XX chromosome set. It hit us square in the face when we saw the results of our own research among consumers on either side of the age of 65 for a new book we're writing. In a national study among men and women ages 63 through 67, we asked if they agree or disagree with this statement: "My best years are behind me." One out of three men replied that was indeed the case. OK, that kind of makes sense, after a long career and accepting the realities of growing older.

But only one out of 10 women said their best years are behind them. That means 90 percent of these sixtysomethings are looking ahead: seeking things to do, people to influence, organizations to run, lives to lead, and dreams to fulfill.

In a new world shaping up to become female-dominant, boomer women appear ready to take control.

Heads up, guys. The future does indeed belong to Generation XX.

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