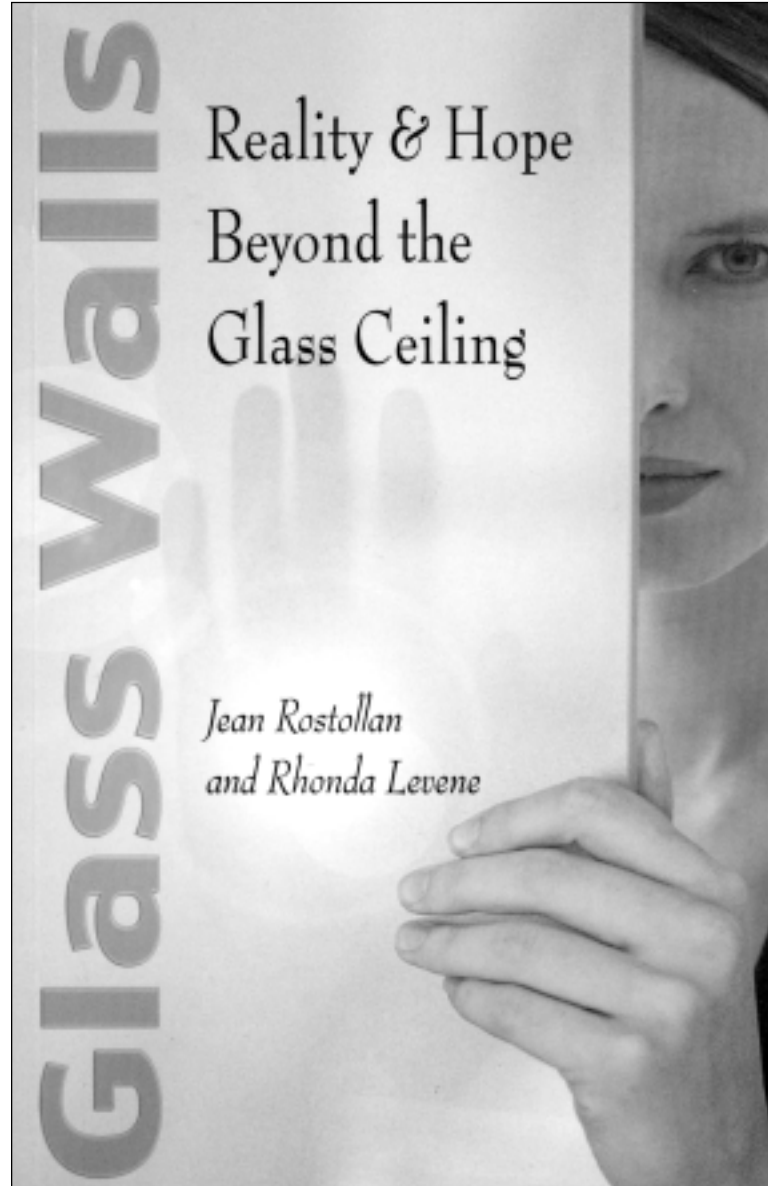


Author with local ties calls attention to 'Glass Walls'

By Julie Quinn



GLASS WALLS: Reality & Hope Beyond the Glass Ceiling, written by Jean Rostollan and Rhonda Levene address the theory that describes the impact of isolation and unexpected marginalization women encounter when organizations are anchored by a closed group of male elitists.

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years in management including more than a decade as a corporate executive officer for a national food service company.

Rostollan has presented to college women's networks, the Minnesota Women Physicians, and various cor-

porate organizations. Along with her professional engagements, she actively donates time for church and the humane society. She has served on numerous civic development committees and the board of directors for a local nonprofit organiza-

tion. Rostollan is married, has one daughter, and lives in Burnsville, Minnesota.

Co-author Levene is the co-founder of Glass Wall Enterprises and currently an executive with Pepsi Co. She has spent over twenty five years in corporate America, holding executive positions in public and private companies. Levene was keynote speaker at the annual retreat for the Dallas Summit, is a regular presenter at women's network organizations including several Fortune 100 companies and was recently profiled in *West Plano People* newspaper.

She lends support to other women through her participation in a national mentoring program and her board involvement with Alley's House. Levene is married, has twin sons and lives in Plano, Texas.

"'Glass Walls' are a significant issue in corporate America because they stifle women's success, underutilize talent, compromise and diminish corporate results and most importantly, allow passive aggressive behavior that manipulates women," Levene said.

She believes that in order to address a problem, one has to first identify and acknowledge the root cause.

"The Glass Wall theory is intended to put a name to the twenty-first century version of the Glass Ceiling and be the catalyst to start a dialogue. We believe that through sharing real stories of other women there is learning and reassurance that they are not alone," Levene said.

The book itself is filled with firsthand accounts of women in high positions who find themselves surrounded by an invisible force field preventing any meaningful contact with their male counterparts. For example Sandra, who gets uninvited to important networking dinners or excluded from meetings and social events

in which she would have contact with customers or exchange ideas with other executives.

Sandra said in the book that she didn't need her peers as part of her social life, "just don't push me away when it's business."

Rostollan and Levene's vision for the book beyond a dialogue is to highlight responsibility and action, initiate change, and inspire more people, not just women, to be "diamonds."

"'Diamonds' are a rare form of leader, men and women that will help us change the face of corporate America," Levene said.

Glass Walls dedicates an entire chapter to the topic of diamonds, how to recognize them and learn from them. Other types of corporate groups are also identified, along with ways to deal with them. "Seeds" are those workers who, on a day-in-and-day-out basis, bear the burden of running a company. They are the "sweat equity" behind a company's success. "In-formers are panderers, or patriarchal wannabees who are, in a sense, spies and saboteurs who hope for personal gain or favor by providing their eyes and ears to the leadership. And then there are "corks," males who automatically agree with anything the patriarchy chooses to do. They are enablers.

The book also provides a strategy for striving for excellence, providing wisdom to women dealing with difficult personalities and coexisting and flourishing in patriarchal work environments.

Glass Walls is, in essence, a survival manual for women moving up through the ranks in any business, particularly those dominated by cronyism. Readers can not only learn to survive, but also thrive, if they so choose.

Anyone interested in *Glass Walls* can access it via their website at www.glasswalls.org, or through national booksellers.