

Gifts of Speech News

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1. Meet Volunteer Beth Wortman



Dear Readers:

This month I'm thrilled to introduce you to our Gifts of Speech volunteer. That's her, Beth Wortman smiling over on the left. Beth is our brand new woman-about-the-web helping make things happen at Gifts of Speech.

Beth recently retired as Senior Vice President and Chief Legal Officer of Life Insurance for Genworth Financial, Inc., a Fortune 300 company and, until 1995, a subsidiary of General Electric Company.

She holds an LL.M in Taxation from New York University Law School, a Juris Doctor from Fordham University School of Law and a B.S. with Honors from the University of Iowa.

A daughter, three granddaughters and two cats keep Beth's life busy. She is an avid reader, who enjoys eclectic research projects & educational classes (making her an ideal match for GoS) and when she is not swimming, she find herself learning Spanish . . . slowly, she says.

Beth researched and wrote some of the items for this **Gifts of Speech** newsletter. I look forward to her future contributions.

I am very lucky to have Beth on board. Before she brought her considerable talents to my attention, GoS was a lonely one-woman effort.

Please feel free to welcome Beth to GoS by emailing her at: gos at sbc dot edu

2. Chinese Women Gain Respect

Professors, social activists and farmers gathered at a seminar in mid-July to talk about the changing role of women in Chinese society. According to some academics, Chinese women were venerated in ancient China, then were oppressed and enslaved. In modern times they have gained more respect.

As the seminar participants explored the past, there was discussion about how the development of Chinese characters reflected the status of women through the ages. There was discussion about secret women-written characters, and also talk about wedding dresses from various ethnic groups.

But it was a speech by Ma Guirong, a 38-year-old farming woman from Weining County, Southwest China's Guizhou Province - one of China's poorest areas - that opened people's eyes and revealed the reality that some Chinese women face today.

Read more at the link below.

Link: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-07/31/content_6454831.htm

3. Patil: India's First Female President

A milestone was reached in India's history on Wednesday with Pratibha Patil being sworn in as the first woman President at a ceremony in Parliament. The 72-year-old from Maharashtra, made an appeal for socially inclusive economic growth, women's empowerment and a united fight against communalism and terrorism.

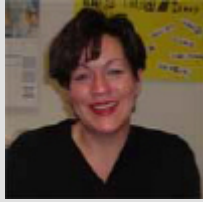
Urging people to fight poverty, ignorance and disease, Patil said India stood at the threshold of a new era of progress. She said the empowerment of women led to the empowerment of the nation.

--From the Hindustan Times article linked below.

Read her speech [here](#).

Link: <http://tinyurl.com/yw3a9n>

4. Virtual Speech Timer Tool



As you might imagine, the gal who collects speeches by women (me - Liz Kent) is also a member of **[Toastmasters International](#)**. Not only is Toastmasters a great place to build your public speaking confidence and skills, you always learn something new by interacting with the other members.

The Toastmasters tip I want to share this week is the location of a Virtual Speech Timer on the web. High school students on debate teams will find this site useful as well as folks preparing speeches for other timed speaking events.

Check out the Virtual Speech Timer at the link below.

Link: <http://tmd55.org/timer.htm>

5. Site of the Month for September

Problems faced by transgendered women (women born in male bodies) has come to my attention in recent months. One site that acts as a resource for trans-women is the **[International Federation for Gender Education](#)**.

IFGE is a non-profit advocacy organization founded in 1987. Its purpose is overcoming the intolerance of transvestitism and transsexualism brought about by widespread ignorance. They are dedicated to outreach through education for the emancipation of all people from restrictive gender norms.

"The crossdressing and transsexual phenomena have been an integral part of human experience as long as there has been a human experience. These phenomena have manifested themselves in every society and in every walk of life throughout history, and continue to affect the lives of vast numbers of people. Yet, as common as they are, ignorance of them, and the resulting intolerance and fear, continues to cost

good people their happiness, their jobs, their families, and their lives. It costs society its neighbors, its friends, and its productive citizens"

- Merissa Sherrill Lynn, Founder

Link: <http://www.ifge.org>

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