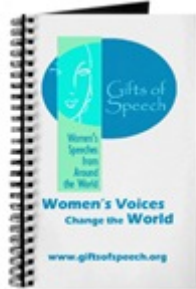


Gifts of Speech News

Issue Two - May 2006

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Featured Product



Journal
\$7.49



**Maria Gorette
Karuhanga**

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1. May Days

When May rolls around many people think of graduations. Female students in western countries can earn college credit without trading sex for grades, but this is not the case in Uganda. At Makerere University in Kampala, women students "complain of being routinely propositioned by lecturers during office hours. One said her teacher demanded that she accompany him to a Lake Victoria beach to discuss her grade. Dormitory residents said that custodians are known to withhold beds if girls don't give them sex. One woman said an admissions officer would not allow her to enroll in a master's program because she refused his advances."

Grades earned in this manner are called "carpet grades" by Ugandans. A small group of women's advocates at Makerere University recently drafted a sexual harassment policy to address the problem. **Maria Gorette Karuhanga** is a human rights lawyer who helped draft the policy. If the policy is approved, it would be among the first of its kind in an African institution of higher learning. It would also put in place a committee of students to hear confidential complaints. Read more at [Women's eNews](#).

Link:

<http://www.womensenews.org/article.cfm/dyn/aid/2722/context/cover/>

2. Two Films to Watch

Two excellent films on women of courage recently came to my attention.

The first is an HBO film titled **Rape in Small Town**. It tells the story of Florence Holway. Fifteen years ago, at age 75, she was brutally raped by 25-year-old John LaForest, who entered her home, raped her vaginally and anally, hog-tied her with a telephone wire, choked her,

and smashed her teeth. During the attack, he said to her, "Isn't this nice? Isn't this great? I ought to come over every week."

A grandmother with a love of life, Holway promised herself during the assault that if she survived, she would make sure her attacker could never do the same thing to another woman. **Rape in A Small Town: The Florence Holway Story** recounts the horrific details of Holway's ordeal, and chronicles her 12-year struggle to bring a criminal to justice - as well as change a flawed legal system. Read more about Florence Holway at [HBO](#) and read a review of the film at [Shakespeare's Sister](#).

The other film is called **Taking the Heat: The First Women Fire Fighters of New York City**. This is the story of Brenda Berkman, and other pioneer female fire fighters, who prevailed after personally damaging struggles to break the gender barrier that prevented women from becoming fire fighters. Visit the official [Taking the Heat](#) site or read a review of the film at [Feministing](#). See also [Women in the Fire Service](#) and [Blaze: Fire Camp for Young Women](#).

If you see a great women's film, please let me know:

lizkentgos at gmail dot com

3. May Site of the Month

CODEPINK is a women-initiated grassroots peace and social justice movement working to end the war in Iraq, stop new wars, and redirect our resources into healthcare, education and other life-affirming activities. **CODEPINK** rejects the Bush administration's fear-based politics that justify violence, and instead calls for policies based on compassion, kindness and a commitment to international law. With an emphasis on joy and humor, **CODEPINK** women and men seek to activate, amplify and inspire a community of peacemakers through creative campaigns and a commitment to non-violence.

CODEPINK plans to declare peace on Mother's Day. They will gather in Washington DC for a 24-hour vigil outside the White House on May 13-14. For more details, visit [CODEPINK](#).

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

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