

# Gifts of Speech News

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### 1. NPR Music - 50 Great Voices

All this year, NPR is presenting the stories of 50 great voices from around the world. So far, they have covered only two women: [Maria Callas](#) and [Mahalia Jackson](#).

Check out the stories, the NPR broadcast links and the video link at these pages above. Wonderful!

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### 2. 1st Conference Harassment in Arab World

From Fox News:

The sexual harassment of women in the streets, schools and work places of the Arab World is driving them to cover up and confine themselves to their homes, said activists at the first-ever regional conference addressing the once taboo topic.

The harassment, including groping and verbal abuse, appears to be designed to drive women out of public spaces and seems to happen regardless of what they are wearing, they said.

This is the FIRST TIME such a conference has been

held in an Arab country. The name of the conference was "Sexual Harassment as Social Violence and its Effect on Women in the Middle East and North Africa Region."

Read [general information about the conference at Fox News](#) and much more specific information at [Al-Ahram Weekly](#).

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### 3. Feminism's Freedom Fighter

If you do not know about [Ayaan Hirsi Ali](#) you will really enjoy taking a moment to stop to learn about her. Here is a short description from an interview conducted by Patt Morrison of the Los Angeles Times:

For five years she's lived under the threat of death from Islamic radicals, and in those five years, she has become an acclaimed and provocative author on matters about Islam and the West. Ayaan Hirsi Ali was born into a Somali Muslim family and eventually made her way to the Netherlands as a refugee.

There she wrote a screenplay for a short film about women's treatment under Islam. Just over two months after it aired, the filmmaker Theo van Gogh was assassinated. A letter threatening Ali's life has meant she has lived under guard ever since -- most recently thanks to a fund set up by private donors.

Read the interview at the link below.

Link: [http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-morrison-new17-2009oct17\\_0,7475877.column](http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-morrison-new17-2009oct17_0,7475877.column)

#### 4. 'Crazy Turtle Woman'



From CNN:

With its white sand and clear, blue water, Trinidad's Matura Beach looks like a postcard. It's a far cry from its recent past, when leatherback sea turtle carcasses littered the ground and kept tourists away. Suzan Lakhan Baptiste's efforts have turned a beach from a leatherback turtle graveyard to a nesting colony.

"Twenty years ago, this was a graveyard," Suzan Lakhan Baptiste said of the six-mile stretch of beach near her home.

"The stench was horrendous. You could smell it for miles," she said.

Saddened and frustrated, Baptiste launched a crusade to help end the slaughter of the gentle giants. Today, she and her group are succeeding: What was once a turtle graveyard is now a maternity ward -- one of the largest leatherback nesting colonies in the world.

Link: <http://www.cnn.com/2009/TECH/05/28/cnnheroes.suzan.lakhan.baptiste/index.html>

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## 5. February Site of the Month

The **AHA Foundation** exists in response to ongoing abuses of women's rights in the name of fundamentalist Islam, Ayaan Hirsi Ali and her supporters established the AHA Foundation in 2007 to help protect and defend the rights of women in the West against militant Islam.

Through education, outreach and the dissemination of knowledge, the Foundation aims to combat several types of crimes against women, including female genital mutilation, forced marriages, honor violence, and honor killings.

The Foundation is opposed to the adoption of dual legal systems to adjudicate family disputes in religious families and supports the separation of all religions and the State.

The AHA Foundation works to reinforce the following basic rights: the rights of women and girls to security and control of their own bodies, the rights of women and girls to an education, the rights of women to work outside the home and to control their own income, the rights of women and girls to freedom of expression and association, and the rights of women and girls to other basic civil rights of citizens and residents defined under the laws of Western democracies and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, regardless of sexual identification.

Read more at the link below.

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



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--Liz Kent

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