



Rosemary Roberts, Internet Radio Host


The Master of Her Own Voice

By Judie Fertig Panneton

When it's showtime at this Loomis home, you'll find the host in front of a computer microphone, dressed in a favorite pair of gray sweatpants and an oversized denim shirt. The dogs, Jessie and

Bella Blue, have already been warned they're in a "no barking zone." Recording is under way: "Hello, welcome back to 'The Patient's Voice.' This is Rosemary Roberts."

"The Patient's Voice" is no ordinary radio program. Its focus is healthcare

and it can only be heard online. The content is driven by Roberts' passion to inform and by  thepatientsvoice.com feedback she gets from consumers. Both creator and host of the show, Roberts also helps other businesses get their messages

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into the online-radio format through her company, Girl On Point.

No one is more surprised than Roberts to be at this point in her career.

She has spent more than 20 years working at several area clinics, doctor’s offices and hospital emergency rooms as a medical assistant, clerical coordinator, patient educator or clinical manager. In 1976, Roberts took a gamble while applying for a medical assistant job with a Del Paso Heights health clinic. “I beat out seven more-experienced applicants by first offering to work two weeks for free to prove my

stuff, and the doctors all chose me in the end,” Roberts recalls.

She was one of those who went beyond the job description whenever she saw a need from her clients, especially in understanding medical terms, procedures and options. In 1982, she was working at an obstetrician’s office where a 36-week pregnant Laotian immigrant complained of feeling sick, and her lab results proved she was in trouble. The on-call physician wouldn’t help, so Roberts called a hematologist friend who offered to see the woman in his office, then she drove the woman

there. The doctor ordered an emergency admittance to a nearby hospital after diagnosing a life-threatening condition.

“If I had taken the ‘subordinate position’ and refused responsibility for this woman, which is the common route, she would have most definitely died,” Roberts says.

It wasn’t until nearly 10 years later, when Roberts wrote a thank-you letter to the emergency room crew she worked with following a horrible day at a local hospital, that her career plans changed. “I had written for years (for myself and on local issues) but thought



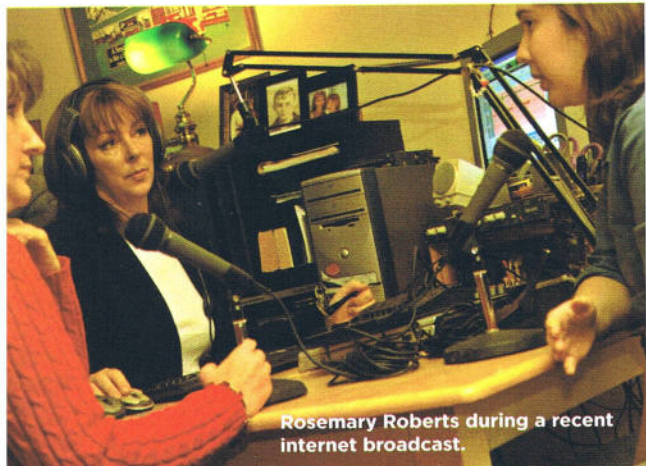
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Rosemary Roberts during a recent internet broadcast.

my lack of a journalistic or English degree prevented me from a writing career," she says.

After positive feedback from the letter's recipients, including high-level administrators, Roberts saw her abilities in a different light. "I was stunned that

these highly educated individuals liked my work," she notes. "It was the first time I realized I could move people with my words and, perhaps, dare to consider writing for publication."

Fast Forward to 2006

Roberts' two-year-old internet radio program is an award-winner and an audience magnet. Roberts has interviewed medical experts as well as senior editors from *Prevention* magazine on topics such as Vioxx dangers, menopause, nutrition, memory loss and diabetes prevention. The programs are commercial-free and, thanks to a nine-month archive

and technology, they can be heard 24 hours a day.

Being so diligently focused on the program's content, Roberts has not concentrated on advertising to make it the "financial, whopping success" she

says it can be. "I've been so busy doing the things I like to do, prepare, produce and post the program, that there isn't enough time in the day to work at marketing," she says.

The radio host pays the bills with work she does as *Girl On Point*, delivering to her business clients creative services that include writing and hosting online programs and streaming audio.

The patient's rights advocate is booking future guests for "The Patient's Voice" and may turn to podcasting to alert users about upcoming shows. Roberts also hopes to add to her *Girl On Point* client base to show them how to use online radio so "they can do great things for others."

Roberts wouldn't change a thing about her current job situation. "As the girl who always felt like the 'odd kid out' when it came to high expectations for patient care, I finally have a voice," she says. "Now I take on issues of basic patient rights and there's no authority telling me to be quiet." ☺

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