

# Social networking takes show on road

By BRUCE MEYERSON  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gina Reno's friends don't expect much eye contact from her when they get together. More often than not, she'll be staring at her cell phone, tapping away feverishly with calloused hands, communicating with people she's never once met in person.

"My friends would get so mad at me because I'm constantly with my phone in my hand," the lifelong Chicagoan said of her tendency to log in to a service called Hookt on her Boost Mobile handset whenever she's got a free moment.

Fortunately, Reno added, her pals have gotten used to it.

"They say, 'Ah, let her alone. Just leave her alone in a corner with a phone.'"

Now, if only her employer was so understanding: "I get in trouble at work all the time. My boss has to yell at me to put it away," said Reno, 36, a sales representative for a magazine subscription marketing company.

If the sudden, immense popularity of MySpace and other social networking sites on the Web still strikes some as bizarre, the technology industry is clearly bent on extending that puzzling phenomenon to the cell phone as a ripe new revenue opportunity.

Mobile manifestations of social networking are springing up as both a cellular extension of existing Web sites and communities that exist only on mobile devices. Complicating the discussion is that there's no strong agreement as to what exactly mobile social networking is or should be.

Some of the more basic offerings revolve largely around joining chat rooms and searching for new friends to communicate with by text message. There's also a growing focus on mobile blogging and uploading the photos and videos that users capture with the increasingly high-end digital cameras built into their cell phones.

The concept of mobile social networking isn't entirely new. Hookt, for example, has its



Bree Michael Warner uses her Helio mobile phone to upload data in real time to her MySpace Web account from a coffee shop in Los Angeles. Cell phones allow more mobility in social networking.

origins in a mobile service launched five years ago by AirG Inc. of Canada. It's grown into an international community of 10 million users who access it through 85 different cell companies under assorted brands.

Still, the real momentum and industry hype didn't start building until mid-2006. It was around that time that MySpace, a unit of News Corp., launched a mobile portal to its gigantic online community through Helio, a wireless service geared toward a younger crowd that's willing to spend more than the typical cell user.

More recently, AT&T Inc.'s Cingular Wireless began offering MySpace Mobile for \$2.99 per month plus data usage charges. Facebook, meanwhile, has partnered with both Virgin Mobile USA, owned jointly by Sprint Nextel and Virgin Mobile Holdings PLC, and Amp'd Mobile Inc., whose backers include Qualcomm and Viacom.

But beyond the scramble to team with the two best-known social networking services, cellular carriers also are looking to offer their customers alternatives.

Both Sprint and Virgin Mobile have signed deals to launch a new application from Inter casting Corp. that's designed to provide a wide selection of communities on a single menu while making these desktop-friendlier services easier to navigate on a handset.

So far, Inter casting has cut deals for its Anthem platform to feature Black Planet, Asian Avenue, MiGente, LiveJournal and Xanga, though it's up to each cell carrier to reach agreements with the specific services to be offered on its cell phones.

Helio won't disclose how many customers it has signed up since its May 2006 launch but says 75 percent of them have used the MySpace service, which is included in Helio's pricey monthly plans.

## New Whiteland teen a presidential scholar

**Robert Stephen Yang McCabe** of New Whiteland, a senior at Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School in Indianapolis, has been named to the Presidential Scholars Program.

He is the son of Alan and Regina McCabe.

**Janette Koon**, a senior financial adviser with Waddell & Reed in Greenwood, has been named a recipient of the firm's Crest Award, a top honor for its financial advisers.

The award goes to firms that achieve exceptional goals. This is the third time Koon has earned the Crest award.

The Johnson County Exchange Club honored **Woody and Telma**



Annette Jones  
PEOPLE

Fix with the "Book of Golden Deeds" recently.

The award is given by the club to individuals who show outstanding service to their community.

Fifty tagged balloons were released by residents and employees of the Franklin United Methodist Community after the 50th anniversary celebration Jan. 11.

A call was received Jan. 13 that one of the balloons had been found

in Auburn, N.Y., by a man delivering the Syracuse newspaper. The balloon had been released by **Maxine Leak** at 4 p.m. Jan. 11.

On Saturday, UPS delivered a box to the Methodist community with the tagged balloon still inflated, along with a picture, note and maps where James Froebel of Auburn found it.

The **Elba L. and Gene Portteus Branigin Foundation** recently awarded a \$2,500 grant to the Indiana Repertory Theatre to support participation by Johnson County students in the IRT's Curricula Linked Student Matinee Program.

Send items for the People column to [ajones@thejournalnet.com](mailto:ajones@thejournalnet.com).

## Come One, Come All to the First ever Triggers Football Party!!!

To be held on Feb. 4th at 5:00 pm to end of game at Triggers Family Restaurant in Morgantown, IN

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**Jacob & Dale**  
Happy Valentine's Day  
We love you  
Mom & Dad

**To My Best Doggie Babysitter**  
Happy Valentine's Day  
Love  
Aunt Hollie

Two great ways to show you care on Valentine's Day! Our LOVE LOCKETS promotion is one of our most popular holiday specials. Express your love for your children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, nieces/nephews, friends or loved ones. LOVE LOCKETS contain a photograph and up to seven lines of type.

For those wanting to express themselves to a mate or significant other, send them a LOVE LINE! Tell your loved one how you feel, a note of friendship, or even a marriage proposal!

♥Advertising deadline to participate is Monday, February 5th, at 5:00 pm. Prepayment is required.

For LOVE LOCKETS please include a photo and a self-addressed envelope when placing your order. Pictures will only be returned when you send a self-addressed stamped envelope. Complete and mail or deliver the form below:

**Love Lockets: \$16 each, or 2 for \$29 (7 lines of type each & photo)**  
**Love Lines: \$11 each (4 lines of type)**

Please Print your message:

1 \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_  I am a Daily Journal subscriber

5 \_\_\_\_\_  Stop here for LOVE LINES Payment Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

6 \_\_\_\_\_  Check enclosed

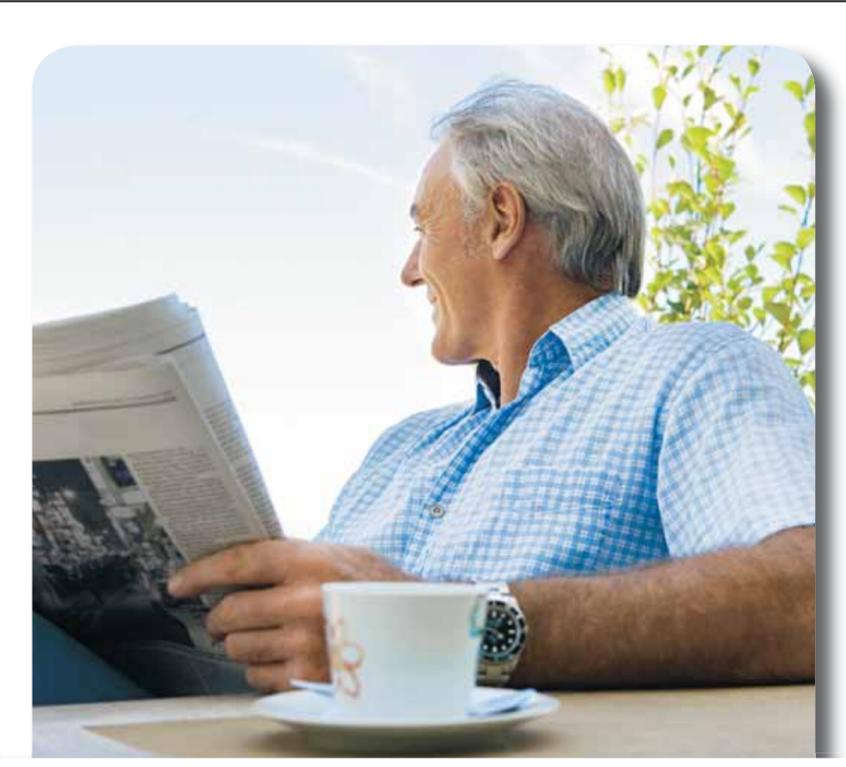
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