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### Reports from Inside the Wall: My Life in Space

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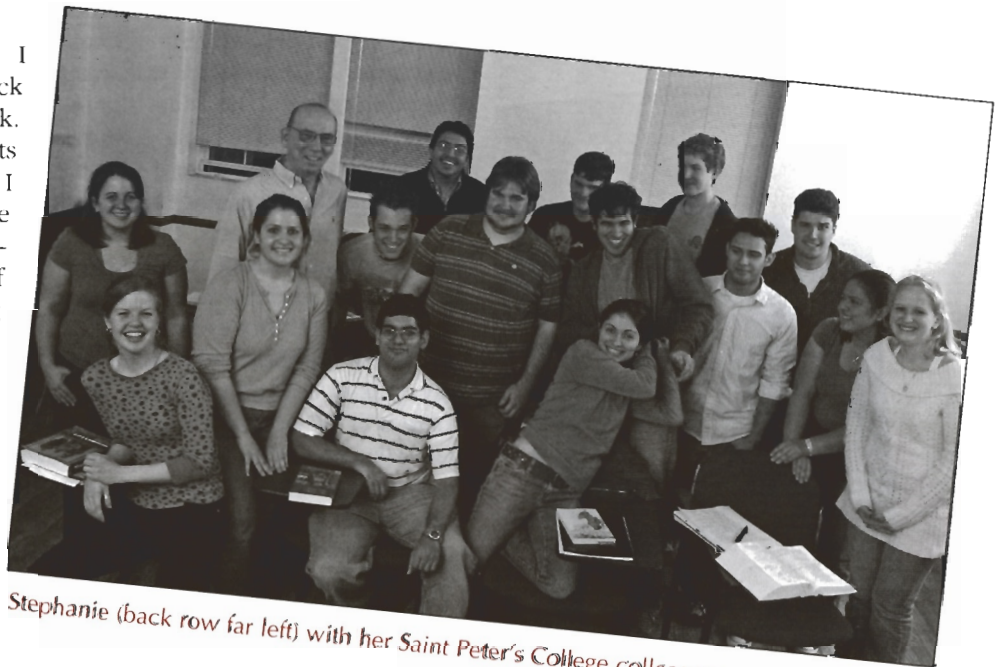
# MY LIFE IN SPACE

By Stephanie Molkentin

**I**n the early morning, I anxiously check MySpace and Facebook. When I read comments detailing how special I am, I want to embrace that person. The problem is they're on the other side of a screen, miles away. I could hug my computer, but it can't hug me back. The world of impersonalized contact has cheapened the intimate friendships that were once valued.

The latest Internet craze is MySpace and Facebook. These social networking websites connect millions of people to each other. School functions are not the prime way to meet people. Instead we live through blogs, friends' recorded comments, and use the Internet as our photo album. Even though 9.5 million people use Facebook, and 106 million people use MySpace, the world seems small to those logged on.

Important jargon for MySpace and Facebook are network, the Wall, and the poke. The network contains thousands of people connected through interests, location, schools, or random factors. The Wall is a place for friends to leave comments. Privacy settings allow either friends to view or the entire network. On MySpace and Facebook, it's no longer an intimate conversation when your network can read the comments. Leaving notes like, "Imm



*Stephanie (back row far left) with her Saint Peter's College colleagues.*

druunnkk!" don't give the best impression, even if it's only intended for your best friend. The poke is native to Facebook; a notice is sent to the poked person, "You've been poked by Bob." Like many things on the Internet, the poke serves no purpose at all.

**M**ySpace is for people of all ages who have valid e-mail addresses. MySpace allows members to post blogs, pictures, favorite TV shows, books, quotes, and interests. Comments are a prominent part of MySpace. Media

such as movies, bands, television shows, and actors' personas use MySpace as a forum for advertising their latest project. MySpace also features personalized layouts for profiles that involve flashing images and bright colors.

Anybody can join Facebook, but it is more college oriented. Facebook progresses everyday, and now allows people from outside companies or graduates to join the network. Opening an account with Facebook is like having a permanent social file on record. It includes your full name, phone numbers, emails, current courses, work information,

and your favorite color. One major benefit is its unlimited photo storage, which is unusual for free websites. Facebook's latest feature is a mini-news feed that blatantly details your friends' website activity.

These networks allow members to search for elementary school friends or current classmates. Finding information is a click away, and stalking is convenient. As long as you can speed-read, reading the online profile is faster than an actual conversation.

Some people's lives revolve around MySpace and Facebook, hoping for comments or new pictures. These socially savvy websites connect me to millions of people and are a major distraction from class work or reality. I go online to quickly check my comments and get caught up in loading photos with witty captions, or individually commenting to my closest 200 friends. Two hours later, I still have a pile of homework and my poor mother is still waiting for a return phone call.

Aside from creating an Internet version of myself, there are consequences to the content on these sites. The profile that portrays me is not only for my friends to see, but outsiders such as predators, parents, and future employers. For this reason the career counseling office at Saint Peter's College suggests students delete any disreputable content from their Facebook and MySpace. Many people use slang, vulgar language, poor grammar, and say ridiculous things on these sites not realizing their profiles can be a first impression.

At SPC, students sent out an off campus party invitation through Facebook and were later blamed for an on-campus riot. Vicious gossip is another problem. Bullying online spreads quickly causing problems between roommates or cliques. It's

myspace header ↓

**stephmolk ©**

More people to stalk me! ↓

**stephmolk © is in your extended network**

Stephanie Molk St. Peters '08 Suffolk County, NY

Sex: Female  
Interested In: Men  
Relationship Status: Single  
Looking for: A Relationship  
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blogging (view more)  
status (view more)  
oooh MyFace! (view more)

**stephmolk ©'s Blurbs**

**About me:**  
i'm steph. www.stephmolk.etsy.com. some write to live, i live to write. one day that will probably change.

**Who I'd like to meet:**  
God, and Sylvia Plath.

music for your ears ↓

How To Save A Life  
The Fray

the perfect place to tease and taunt people because many of your peers read it.

Predators operating through MySpace have an easier experience than Facebook. Facebook has more defined restrictions for viewers of profile and pictures. MySpace allows members to set their profile to private, but many avoid that option and become susceptible to the one-two-click predators.

For some people these relationships are fulfilling, but I prefer colorful personalities rather than colorful

monitors. I still value three hour-long conversations rather than one-sentence comments on walls, and prefer a handshake to a poke. I'd delete my accounts, but then I'd be disconnected from my own generation. ■

*Stephanie Molkenitin is the editor of the Pauw Wow, the student paper of Saint Peter's College.*