

# Parents of 13 year old find out dangers of internet first hand

Shannon could hear the footsteps behind her as she walked toward home.

The thought of being followed made her heart beat faster.

"You're being silly," she told herself, "no one is following you."

To be safe, she began to walk faster, but the footsteps kept up with her pace. She was afraid to look back and she was glad she was almost home.

Shannon said a quick prayer, "God please get me home safe." She saw the porch light burning and she leaned against the door for a moment, relieved to be in the safety of her home. She glanced out the window to see if anyone was there. The sidewalk was empty.

After tossing her books on the sofa, she decided to grab a snack and get on-line.

She logged on under her screen name ByAngel213. She checked her Buddy List and saw GoTo123 was on. She sent him an instant message:

ByAngel213: Hi. I'm glad you are on! I thought someone was following me home today. It was really weird!

GoTo123: LOL You watch too much TV. Why would someone be following you? Don't you live in a safe neighborhood?

ByAngel213: Of course I do. LOL I guess it was my imagination cuz' I didn't see anybody when I looked out.

GoTo123: Unless you gave your name out on-line. You haven't done that have you?

ByAngel213: Of course not. I'm not stupid you know.

GoTo123: Did you have a softball game after school today?

ByAngel213: Yes and we won!!

GoTo123: That's great! Who did you play?

ByAngel213: We played the Hornets. LOL. Their uniforms are so gross! They look like bees. LOL

GoTo123: What is your team called?

ByAngel213: We are the Canton Cats. We have tiger paws on our uniforms. They are really cool.

GoTo123: Did you pitch?

ByAngel213: No I play second base. I got to go. My homework has to be done before my parents get home. I don't want them mad at me. Bye!

GoTo123: Catch you later. Bye

Meanwhile ... GoTo123 went to the member menu and began to search for her profile. When it came up, he highlighted it and printed it out. He took out a pen and began to write down what he knew about Angel so far.

Her name: Shannon

Birthday: Jan. 3, 1985

Age:13

State where she lived: North Carolina

Hobbies: softball, chorus, skating and going to the mall.

Besides this information, he knew she lived in Canton because she had just told him. He knew she stayed by herself until 6:30 pm. every afternoon until her parents came home from work. He knew she played softball on Thursday afternoons on the school team, and the team was named the Canton Cats. Her favorite number 7 was printed on her jersey. He knew she was in the eighth grade at the Canton Junior High School. She had told him all this in the conversations they had on-line. He had enough information to find her now.

Shannon didn't tell her parents about the incident on the way home from the ball park that day. She didn't want them to make a scene and stop her from walking home from the softball games.

Parents were always overreacting and hers were the worst. It made her wish her parents wouldn't be so overprotective.

By Thursday, Shannon had forgotten about the footsteps following her.

Her game was in full swing when suddenly she felt someone staring at her.

It was then that the memory came back. She glanced up from her second base position to see a man watching her closely.

He was leaning against the fence behind first base and he smiled when she looked at him. He didn't look scary and she quickly dismissed the fear she had felt.

After the game, he sat on a bleacher while she talked to the coach. She noticed his smile once again as she walked past him. He nodded and she smiled back.

He noticed her name on the back of her shirt. He knew he had found her.

Quietly, he walked a safe distance behind her. It was only a few blocks to Shannon's home, and once he saw where she lived he quickly returned to the park to get his car.

Now he had to wait. He decided to get a bite to eat until the time came to go to Shannon's house. He drove to a fast food restaurant and sat there until time to make his move.

Shannon was in her room later that evening when she heard voices in the living room

"Shannon, come here," her father called. He sounded upset and she couldn't imagine why.

She went into the room to see the man from the ballpark sitting on the sofa.

"Sit down," her father began, "this man has just told us a most interesting story about you." Shannon sat back. How could he tell her parents anything? She had never seen him before today!

"Do you know who I am, Shannon?" the man asked.

"No," Shannon answered.

"I am a police officer and your online friend, GoTo123."

Shannon was stunned. "That's impossible! GoTo is a kid my age! He's 14 and he lives in Michigan!"

The man smiled. "I know I told you all that, but it wasn't true. You see, Shannon, there are people on-line who pretend to be kids; I was one of them. But while others do it to find kids and hurt them, I belong to a group of parents who do it to protect kids from predators. I came here to find you to teach you how dangerous it is to talk to people on-line. You told me enough about yourself to make it easy for me to find you. Your name, the school you went to, the name of your ball team and the position you played. The number and name on your jersey just made finding you a breeze."

Shannon was stunned. "You mean you don't live in Michigan?"

He laughed. "No, I live in Raleigh. It made you feel safe to think I was so far away, didn't it?"

She nodded.

"I had a friend whose daughter was like you. Only she wasn't as lucky. The guy found her and murdered her while she was home alone.

Kids are taught not to tell anyone when they are alone, yet they do it all the time on-line. The wrong people trick you into giving out information a little here and there on-line. Before you know it, you have told them enough for them to find you without even realizing you have done it. I hope you've learned a lesson from this and won't do it again. Tell others about this so they will be safe too?"

"It's a promise!"

That night Shannon and her Dad and Mom all knelt down together and thanked God for protecting Shannon from what could have been a tragic situation.

*Editor's note: Internet sites ranging from local law enforcement homepages for children, .edu sites that include all levels of public, private and church schools and many .org homepages tell the story of Shannon, the Internet friend of GoTo123.*

*And while a number of those web sites tell this as a true story, it's not. According [www.snoped.com/horrors/parental/shannon.htm](http://www.snoped.com/horrors/parental/shannon.htm), the story was written by two Christians concerned about the danger unwittingly presented by young people giving out too much personal information online, this cautionary tale first surfaced on the Internet in January 1998.*

**The FBI presents "Protecting Your Children from the Internet," Oct. 14, 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., in the Theater.**

# OF NOTE

377ABW.NUCLEUS@kirtland.af.mil. Deadline for Oct. 8 is today.

## BRIEFINGS

**“Protecting Your Children from the Internet,”** a presentation by FBI Special Agent Bill Georgi of the Albuquerque Cyber Crime Division, is offered **Oct. 14**, 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. in the Base Theater. Absolutely no children 6-16 years old will be permitted.

## CLOSURES

**Work on the Manzano bridge approach begins Oct. 4 and will last nine weeks.**

This is necessary for a Contractor to repair the approaches on both ends of the bridge. One lane of the bridge will remain open at all times and flagmen will be directing traffic. Expect delays and seek alternate routes. Contact Ruben Segovia at 934-9680 or Lew Seebinger at 934-9681.

**The Kirtland AFB Family Support Center is closed for an official function, today, 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m.** If you have an emergency, please contact a staff member at 934-2599 or the Command Post at 846-3777.

## FINANCE

**Enrolling in the Survivor Benefit Program prior to retiring from military service will ensure they will have guaranteed income after your death.** Additional details are available by calling your SBP Counselor, Edward Terlaje at 846-5508.

## LEISURE

**The 377th Air Base Wing Chapel sponsors a trip to Colorado Springs, Colo., Oct. 8-9** to watch the Air Force Academy vs. University of New Mexico

football game. To sign up or obtain more information, contact 1st Lt. Randy Carlson at 853-6281.

**The “Hispanic Heritage Month Golf Tournament 2004” will be on October 6 at 11 a.m. at the Tijeras Arroyo Golf Course on Kirtland AFB.** The entry fee for the 4-Person Scramble is \$40 per person which includes green fees, cart, range balls, and a meal. Local celebrities and musicians will be participating in the event. For more information, contact Angel Alvarado at 853-5640 or Chuy Sanchez at 846-2479.

## MEETINGS

**The African-American Heritage Month planning committee meets Oct. 13 and 27, 2-3 p.m.** in Room 120 of the Consolidated Support Building. Contact Ms. Cynthia Laughlin, 846-8672, 2nd Lt. Wesley Cook, 846-2517 or Master Sgt. Raymond Nivens, 846-6141.

**Veterans Affairs Benefits and Entitlements is Oct. 8, 1-4 p.m.** at the Family Support Center. Call 846-0741 to register.

**New Mexico Department of Labor Transition Assistance Program meets Oct 6-8, 8 a.m.-4:00 p.m. at the Consolidated Support Building.** The 3-day workshop is open to all retiring military members and their spouses who are within 2 years of retiring or to separating military members and their spouses are within 1 year of separating. Civilians undergoing a Reduction in Force are also welcome to attend. Job search techniques, resume writing and interviewing will be covered. Please wear civilian attire and bring a resume for review. Call the Family Support Center at 846-0741 to register.

**Disability Transition Assistance Program (DTAP) is Oct 5, 1-3 p.m.** at the family Support Center. Bring a copy of your medical record. Call 846-0741 to register.

**The Hearts Apart Support Group meets Oct 2, 1-3 p.m. in the Consolidated Support Building, room 120.** The group is open to all who have a deployed family member. Call Master Sgt Lloyd McKenzie at 846-0741.

## MVD

**For convenient service, stop by the Motor Vehicle Division (inside Information, Tickets and Travel), 8 a.m.-4 p.m. (8-9 a.m. for military priority).** The office does not conduct road tests. MVD also has voter registration forms. Call 846-8390.

## ODDS/ENDS

**The commissary is open, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Columbus day, Oct. 11.**

**Albuquerque Sunport needs volunteer victims for the Sunport Tri-Annual Exercise, Oct 14th, 7 a.m. -4 p.m.** in the old Terminal Building Great Hall . Anyone 18 or older can volunteer. Contact Lance at 244-7859, LMckinney@cabq.gov or Steven at 244-7717, SPicou@cabq.gov.

**Applications are now being accepted for the Leaders Encouraging Airman Development program.** This program delegates authority to unit and wing commanders to nominate highly qualified Airmen to attend the U.S. Air Force Academy Prep School with the intention of Academy appointment to follow. Applicants must be a U.S. citizen or able to obtain citizenship before entry into the academy the following year, be unmarried and have

no dependents, not have passed their twenty-second birthday by **July 1, 2005** and be of high moral character. Interested applicants should contact the Education Center at 846-9933 or 846-8955 to set up an appointment with the guidance counselor. Deadline for applications to reach the Air Force Academy Admissions Office is **Jan. 31**.

**Special commemorative coins sold at the Air Force birthday ball are still available for \$4.** To place an order, contact 2nd Lt. Marietta Sanders at 846-5628.

**Service Corp of Retired Executives Small Business Counseling is offered Oct 5, 9-11:30 a.m. by appointment only at the Family Support Center.** A volunteer from SCORE is available to discuss your business plan and to answer questions regarding starting a small business. Spouses are encouraged to attend. Call 846-0741 to make an appointment.

**Cody Unser, daughter of racecar driver Al Unser Jr., will speak at the U.S. Department of Energy, Pennsylvania and H Street- Bldg 381, in Conference Room ABC on Oct. 7** at 10 a.m.

**Manager needed for the Kirtland Officer's Spouse's Club Thrift Shop.** Duties include shop management, organization and coordination of all volunteers, meet with the Thrift Shop Council, prepare monthly report to Kirtland Officer's Spouse's Club, close out register, make bank deposits, and implement ideas to increase sales. Hours are Mon. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Wed. 10 a. m.-3 p.m., Thurs. 9 a.m.-8 p.m., and the second Sat. every month 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Salary is \$700 a month. Position includes six weeks paid vacation annually. Please stop by the Thrift Shop and fill out an application at 4500 Biggs Ave., Kirtland AFB. Deadline for application is **Oct. 31**.