



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 19, 2008

Contact: Maggie Hirko

970-419-8240

www.beetstreet.org

All Invited to Post Secrets and Blog

How do people meet each other and stay connected in an increasingly busy, technology-driven world?

They use the media of course — the social media — in the form of everything from blogs, wikis, social networking sites and photo sharing, to podcasts and videos.

Social media is the latest phenomenon in communication. It is the way people are now using technology to connect with each other and share their stories, ideas, and art with the world.

From April 23-26, 2008, Beet Street in Fort Collins presents *Social Media: Telling Stories, Changing Lives*.

Saturday, April 26 is the biggest program day, with two panel discussions, a special event with blogsperts (blog experts) from The Buried Life, and an evening lecture discussion and book signing with Frank Warren, founder of PostSecret.com. All events take place at the Northside Aztlan Community Center, 112 East Willow in Fort Collins, Colorado.

The Buried Life is a group of four 20-something regular guys who host a popular blog (www.TheBuriedLife.com) that invites people from all over the world to share their lists of “what do you want to do before you die.” Relying on goodwill, guts and sheer determination, they are traveling across the U.S. and Canada inviting everyone they meet to live their dreams and help others do the same. On April 26, they will unveil a “Colorado Reel” composed of the “lists” in video format that Coloradoans email them between now and April 20. In addition, they will select a few people who have blogged written or video lists and help them fulfill one of their dreams that day.

PostSecret.com is a community art project with a huge following, where people anonymously mail in a self-created postcard with a secret written on it. The postcards range from haunting to hilarious, but they always have an element of art and beauty. Every Sunday, Frank Warren selects approximately 20 cards from the many he receives each week to post on his blog. Within a year of its launch in 2005, PostSecret was a smash hit. It is the third most popular blog of the nearly 30 million blogs online. It gets 2.3 million unique visitors a month and 3 million page loads a month.

PostSecret has collected and displayed more than 2,500 original pieces of art from people around the world out of almost 200,000 received to date. Warren has now published four books featuring some of the hundreds of postcards people have sent to him.

The panel discussions begin at 11:00 a.m. with participants from traditional and online media, blogs, the 2008 Democratic Convention, The Buried Life, and Colorado State University.

Events kick off earlier in the week, on April 23 and 24, when StoryCorps will visit Fort Collins. Twelve pairs of people from northern Colorado, one to interview and the other to be interviewed, will be selected to participate in the acclaimed oral history project catalogued in the Library of Congress and aired weekly over most National Public Radio stations. While not strictly “social media,” these oral histories of everyday Americans will be available by podcast on the Beet Street website and may be considered for national broadcast as well. As Beet Street reflects on the new ways that people tell their stories via blogs, it also recognizes the value of generational storytelling that StoryCorps embodies. StoryCorps has facilitated over 15,000 interviews since 2003.

On Friday, April 25, people from across town can join in the first ever Fort Collins Blog Jam. For 24 hours, everyone can post their “10,000 little things we love about Fort Collins.” For anyone who has never blogged or does not have computer access, volunteers will be available during the day to assist them with internet access at the Library or on Old Town Square.

So how do you participate in any or all of these events?

- Those interested in being selected for a 40-minute interview with the StoryCorps project, can call 970-419-8240 or apply online at <http://www.beetstreet.org/Social-Media>.
- Anyone is welcome to mail in a handmade, anonymous postcard expressing their “secret.” Postcards will be included in an art gallery showcase and delivered to Frank Warren for the PostSecret project, where there is a chance your postcard will end up on the blog or in his next book. Send postcards to: PostSecret at Beet Street, 19 Old Town Square, Suite 234, Fort Collins, CO 80524-2471.
- Everyone can join in the fun with The Buried Life. Blog your own list of “Things you want to do before you die” at www.TheBuriedLife.com and/or send a short video/photo clip to info@beetstreet.org be part of the Colorado Reel unveiled on April 26. When The Buried Life visits Fort Collins, they may select you and help you achieve one of your wishes.
- To participate in Blog Jam 2008, visit <http://blogjam2008.blogspot.com> on April 25 starting at 12:01am to post your favorite thing about Fort Collins and read others.

For a full schedule of events and updates, please check online at <http://www.beetstreet.org/Social-Media>

Beet Street (www.beetstreet.org) is an economic development initiative created by the Fort Collins Downtown Development Authority in 2007 to foster, celebrate, and inspire human creativity through diverse cultural experiences and programming in Old Town Fort Collins.