

Beacon Bits

Happy New Year! I hope you and your family had a wonderful holiday season and that 2008 will be a healthy, prosperous year for you and yours.

Support The Beacon In 2008

Delivering the *Beacon* to every mailing address in Andover at no charge every month is a risky business. The risk is that you'll think the *Beacon* is free – and that's far from the truth!

It costs about \$4,000 a month (and many, many hours of volunteer labor) for the *Beacon* to arrive in mailboxes, and advertisers cover only a portion of that expense. The rest has to come from out-of-town subscriptions and voluntary donations from Andover residents.

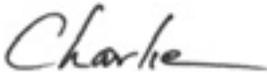
So if you enjoy the *Beacon* or feel it plays an important role in keeping Andover a great place to live, please use the membership form below or the reply envelope inserted in this issue to do your part to keep the *Beacon* coming.

Our goal is to have 325 households show their support this year. Please send a donation today, then encourage your friends and neighbors to "get a round tuit" and send theirs, too!

...Or Donate To The Beacon Online

This year you can donate up to \$50 via credit card on the Web. We've signed up with Amazon.com's "Honor System" to avoid all the challenges of accepting credit cards online. Amazon.com is very good at that, and they've made their secure payment system available to small fundraisers like the *Beacon*.

To donate up to \$50 online, visit AndoverBeacon.com and click the "Click To Give" button. All the rest will be handled on Amazon.com's secure payment site. But be sure to click the "Send Info" button on the confirmation page so we know who the donation is from!



Next Month's Beacon...

...should be in mailboxes on Friday, Feb. 1. Please get all ads, articles, etc. to us by **Tues., Jan. 15**, at the latest. And **earlier is always better!**

Justin from page 1

School and Merrimack Valley High School, graduating in 2006. His family included his mother, stepfather, and three siblings – an older sister, a younger sister, and a younger brother.

Ladd said McDaniel met his wife, Alicia, while they were both in the Army, and they married about six months ago. They were expecting their first child.

The family's phone number is unlisted, and a neighbor said family members do not want to talk to the press. Friends and school officials described McDaniels as a young man with a strong desire to serve in the military.

"It appeared to be his purpose in life to serve his country and support our troops, in the way he dressed, in the way he acted," said Sue Sydnor, assistant principal at Merrimack Valley High School. Sydnor said even in high school, McDaniel sported a military hair cut. She said McDaniel felt strong loyalty to his friends and family.

Sydnor and Associate Principal Jim Gorman said McDaniel was not particularly active in school activities, although he did play football in his freshman or sophomore year. Friends said he liked to listen to music, play video games, watch TV, and hang out with friends. He briefly worked at Wal-Mart in Concord. He was also in an alternative program in Merrimack Valley Learning Center.

Between junior and senior year of high school, McDaniel completed basic training. "He wanted to be a soldier; he was very committed to that as a career," Gorman said. "He took a great deal of pride in being part of the military." After graduating, he switched from the reserves to active duty. Friends said he wanted to serve his country, provide for his family, and get the benefits that would allow him to continue his education.

McDaniel would occasionally return to his elementary school, in uniform, for a visit. "He seemed to really have a focus, he was very happy," said Andover Elementary/Middle School Principal Jane Slayton.

Friends described McDaniel as a person who went out of his way to help others. Christina Hitchmoth, who

grew up with McDaniel, said when she moved to Andover, McDaniel showed her around town.

After school, the two worked together in the kitchen at Proctor Academy, cleaning and cooking. McDaniel, she said, never liked to see anyone upset. "He would always try to put a smile on someone's face, by putting a pot on his head or something," Hitchmoth said. "He would tell jokes or make a goofy face at someone. Mostly he'd just run up and grab you, give you a big hug, and say, 'It's okay, it's a good day.'"

Hitchmoth said McDaniel helped her with relationship problems and gave her advice. "If a friend called in the middle of night, saying, 'I need a ride' or 'I'm in trouble,' he'd be the first to get up and go," she said.

In high school, she said, some people looked down on McDaniel because he was willing to befriend anyone. "He'd talk to anyone, no matter what they talked or dressed like, what crowd they were in," she said. "He'd never act snobby. People didn't understand him."

Eric Todd, one of McDaniel's classmates at Merrimack Valley Learning Center, said McDaniel would help friends with anything from schoolwork to cleaning. Todd said he [Todd] sometimes brought his troubles from home into school, and McDaniel would always take the time to listen. "He'd talk to me about it. He helped me out a lot," Todd said.

Ladd said McDaniel continued to help friends while stationed at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii. Ladd and McDaniel knew each other from high school and joined the army together. When Ladd was stationed in Missouri, McDaniel would call him frequently to ask when he was coming to Hawaii. "He was just really supportive, he said, 'I can't wait until you get down here so we can hang out,'" Ladd said.

When Ladd arrived, McDaniel showed him around and told him where the good beaches were. Although the two had not been close friends in the past, they reminisced about high school and occasionally went to the beach together. They didn't talk much about McDaniel's deployment.

Hitchmoth said she last talked to McDaniel about two months ago, before he left for Iraq. "He said he liked it, he's having fun, he and his wife get along great," she said. "He said, 'I think I made the right choice. I'm happy I can help other people.' That's the last I heard from him."

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Many kind words and condolences have been posted on the Web in Justin's honor. Search on his name and you'll find a number of sites on which you can read others' tributes or add your own.

BEACON MEMBERS WIN!

Each month the *Beacon* holds a random drawing among its members to give away valuable prizes provided by area businesses. **Become a member** for a year, support the *Beacon*, and join the fun! This month's winners are:

Andover Pizza Chef	Large 2-Topping Pizza	Hastings Rigollet
Blackwater Junction Rest.	Gift Certificate	Robert Guardia
East Andover Marketplace	Gift Certificate	Bob and Nancy Welch
Judy Evans	Handknit Scarf	Faith Downes
Jake's Market and Deli	Gift Certificate	Bill Keyser
Kearsarge Magazine	1-Year Subscription	Lana Nelson
MacKenna's Restaurant	Gift Certificate	Diane and Bud Rice
Mary Kay - Laura Condon	Gift Certificate	Pamela Brown
New Horizons Hairstylists	Hair Care Products	Wayne and Sally Nicoll

Winners – contact the Beacon at 735-5331 to collect your prize.

Prizes not redeemable for cash.

BECOME A BEACON MEMBER!

Here's my member donation of \$ _____ for (check one):
 Local Seasonal (\$25 min) Out of Town (\$25 min) Gift Subscr. (\$25 min)

Local or Out of Town

Your Name _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Phone or E-mail _____

Seasonal

Other Name _____
 Other Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Phone or E-mail _____

Seasonal: which months are you at the "other" address?

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