

Running a tight ship

Andover Townsman
June 1, 2006

Assistant track coach set to enter new turf: the courtroom

By Alison McGonagle

Since graduating from Andover High School in 1997, Craig Hartwell has joined the Coast Guard, successfully pursued two degrees, excelled as a track coach, worked airport security after September 11, and married his sweetheart.

Next up: He'll be a lawyer.

This Friday, he graduates from Massachusetts School of Law.

While the commencement is joyous for Hartwell, the school will sorely miss him. Michael Coyne, associate dean at Massachusetts School of Law, called Hartwell exactly the type of student the school hopes to attract.

"I saw both sides of him over the past three years," Coyne said. "I was his teacher during his first year, which is normally very stressful and difficult for the student. He excelled from the time class started to the end. He is bright, prepared, a remarkable student to teach.

Coyne also saw Hartwell outside of the school, because Coyne's son often ran against Andover as a member of the Central Catholic High School track team.

"Both sides bode very well for his future success in the legal profession," said Coyne.

After graduating from Andover High, Hartwell attended the Coast Guard Academy. He later transferred to Northeastern University, studying history and political science. While he chose to leave behind the Coast Guard, he did come away from the academy with something lasting – his relationship with future wife Chris, a third grade teacher at Bancroft Elementary, whom he married in 2004.

Between undergraduate and law school, Hartwell promised himself he'd take some much needed time off. During that year, he

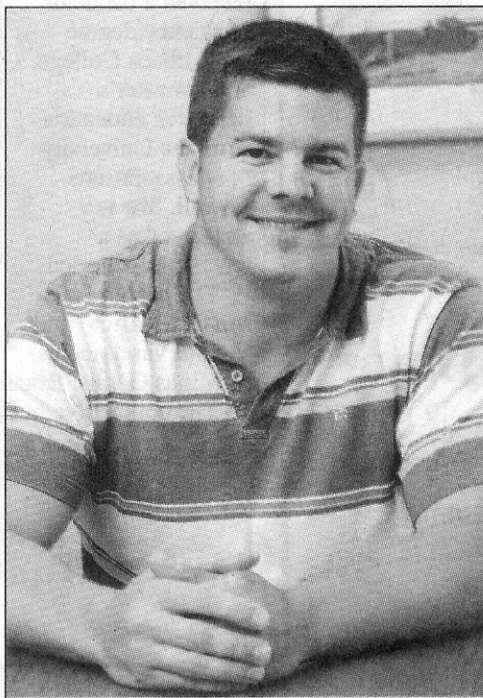


PHOTO BY TIM JEAN

Craig Hartwell joined the Coast Guard, secured airports after September 11 and has helped athletes such as the Andover High students on the 2006 New England Indoor Champion 4x200 relay team.

worked for the Transportation Security Administration at Logan Airport. He was part of the first group that took over, after September 11, when government agents replaced private hires at security check-point positions.

"I liked the job long enough to stay two years," Hartwell said with a laugh. The hours did allow Hartwell's pursuit of another passion, coaching.

"Track has always been the most pure thing in my life, aside my relationship with my family, and now my wife," he said. "Kids pour their hearts into it, and if you don't do the same, you're cheating them. You can't play favorites. The stopwatch doesn't lie."

Hartwell knows this well, as he ran track during high school and college. He began coaching at AHS before law school, through this winter. He recently moved to Middleton with his wife, and began coaching track at St. John's Preparatory School in Danvers. The move has given him new perspective on coaching, and kids, he said.

What's next? The Massachusetts Bar Association Entry Exam.

"I have a six-week bar review course starting after graduation," Hartwell said, "so it's a little anticlimactic. While you're a lawyer after you attend graduate school, you're not an attorney until you pass the bar.

"But it will be nice to have that diploma."

"He has everything you expect in a law student, and a younger student," said Coyne. "I think Craig embodies many of these talents. All his classmates liked him. He was admired and his opinions were respected. He was a pleasure to have as a student, and he will be successful due to his work ethic, intelligence and character."

Ideally, Hartwell would like to continue coaching and to practice "Main Street law," what he describes as day-to-day work that helps people's lives.

"I want to do the little things that I can go home to my wife and say, 'Hey, this is what I did today,'" Hartwell said.

In the worst case scenario, Hartwell said he will treat coaching as his community service, and continue to do as much as he can.

"You can count on it," he said.