

## Alumni of the Month – Don Barnard



### Year of Graduation

1979

### What have you done since graduating from Port Allegany High School?

I went to college at Lock Haven University with Ron Stayer, the late Dana Bachman and my brother Gary 'Odd' and graduated in 1983 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science.

That winter I moved to Austin, TX with Kirk Binder and Steve Herger. We lived together in 3 or 4 places for about 4 years. During that time I kicked around in some menial jobs (clothes salesman, construction equipment rental, repo Man) that stunk for a few years and then landed a good job with a major insurance company, Farmers Insurance.

During that time I finished my Master's in Criminal Justice, and in 1995 I started with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) as a Special Agent in San Antonio, TX. I later transferred to San Diego, CA where I made one of the best decisions of my life and married my wife Natasha (Tash), who is also a Special Agent with the DEA.

Through the years we've lived in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where my oldest son Zane was born, Reno, NV, where my little boy Tanner was born and now we live in Mexico City, Mexico. My wife and I work in the United States Embassy in Mexico City seeing the darker side of what casual drug use does. Fortunately, we've come out of it safe and healthy and I will be retiring in April of this year with Tash following soon thereafter. I plan on doing some teaching.

In the last few years I founded the Gator Fund; an endowment to help fund some needs (academic, artist, and athletic) for our children in the Port Allegany School District.

I'll take this space for some shameless promotion. If you're interested and would like to explore a donation please go to <http://www.cattfoundation.org> click on the "Donate" button and fill in the online form. On the "review donation screen" type in "Gator Fund" in the fund name box. Thanks in advance!

### Where do you currently live?

Mexico City, Mexico. 25 million people, bad traffic and good food.

By the way, football is huge here. Zane plays safety and wide receiver and is way bigger and better than I ever was. Tanner's a slick point guard on the basketball team.

### **Who was your favorite teacher in high school? Why were they your favorite?**

I remember all very fondly and never had a teacher I disliked, even a little. I remember the sayings from, Mr. Petzold ("Let's turn to page, page, page, page..."), Mr. Saiers ("Meet 'em in the hole." sung to the tune of *'Bringing in the Sheaves'*) and a whole bunch others. My favorite teachers were Mr. Gribbin and Mr. Saiers for teaching me how to enjoy Shakespeare and write a good research paper, both of which I still do today.

Lastly, I have a soft spot in my heart for Mrs. Gregg who saw something in me that some didn't even though I was disrespectful and often times rude to her. She encouraged me to try pre-law in college which opened my mind to many opportunities that I took advantage of later in life.

### **What is your fondest memory of Port Allegany High School?**

Playing sports and those things like melancholy, gray November football practices, frozen hair after a winter basketball game, and the girls in short shorts at track practice. Holly, you know who I'm talking about!