

# Elizabethtown

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*A Crystal Ball to View*

**EARTH'S  
CLIMATIC  
FUTURE**

# Dan Washburn '96: From Elizabethtown Blue Jay to Real "Shanghaiist"

by Laura Marks '07

Dan Washburn's journey to find his perfect professional "fit" led him from the quaint streets of Elizabethtown to China's largest city, Shanghai.

After graduating in 1996, Washburn began his journalism career penning a column on extreme sports for *The Times* in Gainesville, Ga. His assignments ranged from bull riding to tractor pulling. The thrill of the off-the-wall sports, though, didn't satisfy Washburn's appetite for a life less ordinary. So, he did something even more extreme than the sports he covered. Washburn bought a one-way ticket to Shanghai.

"I was getting a little bored with my newspaper job. I figured I needed to make a change and go abroad," recalls Washburn. "Moving to China seemed like a great opportunity."

Washburn began his "Chinese chapter" as a conversational English teacher at Shanghai University. After two years of teaching, Washburn set off on a solo backpacking trip that covered more than half of China. Traveling by train or bus and staying in the homes of former students and acquaintances, Washburn chronicled his journey in an online diary—[shanghaidiaries.com](http://shanghaidiaries.com). As the weeks passed, more and more people read his memoirs and invited him to visit. Washburn's tour of China lasted four months.

Arriving back in Shanghai, Washburn continued to update [shanghaidiaries.com](http://shanghaidiaries.com). "Shanghai Diaries actually got a decent amount of readers and became almost like a city blog," Washburn explains. "Gradually, I started thinking that it would be a good idea to get more people involved and maybe even get a brand name."

In May 2005, Washburn met with the publisher of the *Gothamist* website to discuss the creation of a website dedicated to Shanghai. "We met over lunch and decided to launch [shanghaiist.com](http://shanghaiist.com) right there," Washburn says. An English-language blog, [shanghaiist.com](http://shanghaiist.com) offers tourists, new arrivals and natives fresh, uncensored information about Shanghai. With the simple click of a mouse, any Internet surfer can experience the full scope of life in this growing Chinese city.

Postings—including event calendars, restaurant and shopping reviews, tips about living in Shanghai, and classified and personal ads—are submitted by Shanghai natives and those like Washburn who have adopted the city as their own. "Shanghaiist contributors are people who love living in Shanghai and want to share it," Washburn explains. During the past year, the alumnus also launched an online boutique at [mudanboutique.com](http://mudanboutique.com). Elizabethtown Magazine readers who

visit the website will receive a 15 percent discount off their order by entering "etown07" at checkout.

Reflecting on his journey halfway around the world, Washburn says, "I just try to do things I enjoy and don't set limits. I recommend getting out of the States, seeing the rest of the world and experiencing different ways of life, because you never know where you'll fit in."



Dan Washburn '96 traveled halfway around the world to find his perfect professional fit in Shanghai.

a catering business. (See photo on page 48.) **Kevin Pugh** finished 11th at the National Standard Racing (NASTAR) Skiing National Championships, which were held March 22–25, 2007, in Steamboat Springs, Colo. He qualified for the event—which included almost 1,400 racers from all over the country—by being ranked first at Keystone Resort, third in Colorado and 50th nationally for his division.

**'95 Robert Gratalo** and wife **Becky Donecker Gratalo '96** welcomed their first child, Joseph Robert, on Dec. 31, 2006. In addition, Robert—who specializes in federal and state business and individual taxation—was named partner at the Beard Miller Company. **Marimba Winston Ivery** is a middle school reading specialist in the Brandywine School District in Delaware. She has been teaching for 11 years.

**Karen Smith Moyer** and husband Tim welcomed their second child, Luke Evan, on August 1, 2006. The Moyer family—which includes their first son, Ethan—lives in Moorestown, N.J. **Andrew Ritchey**—general manager of Ritchey's Dairy of Martinsburg, Pa.—was recognized in a column in the *Morrisons Cove Herald*. Ritchey's Dairy is the only family-owned dairy still in business in Blair County, Pa.

**'96 Mark Clapper** was one of 10 recipients of a 2007 Professional Development Scholarship from the National Educational Alumni Trust. **Sarah Cornell** married Tim Haus on November 4, 2006. Sarah—who earned her master's degree in reading instruction from the University of Albany—is a teacher at Lackawanna Trail Elementary School. The couple resides in Lake Kewanee, Pa. **Becky Donecker Gratalo** (See Class of '95). **Laurie Melson Jentes** and husband Eric announce the August 30, 2006, birth of their daughter, Grace Elizabeth. **Katherine Miller** has been a director at the Food Network for two years. In this position, she oversees the logistics and financials involved in producing the network's in-house shows, including "Emeril Live," "30 Minute Meals," "Tyler's Ultimate" and "Iron Chef America." **Deborah Mull Sasser** and husband Karl announce the July 19, 2006, birth of their son, Jake Nicholas. **Francis Schodowski** and wife Amy welcomed