

THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL

The 1997 President's Trail Report:

For much of 1996 there did not appear to be much tangible progress in advancing the Montour Trail. However, much was happening that has led to a late burst of progress and should result in more in '97.

The Allegheny Trail Alliance was formed as a result of the 1995 Spine Line Summit. It is now an incorporated group of seven trails along the Pittsburgh to Cumberland, MD corridor, dedicated to completion of a through trail to Washington DC.. The Montour is one of these and can expect benefit from their coordinated efforts at marketing and fund raising.



Robinson Township of Washington County got on the MTC bandwagon this year beginning in the Spring by clearing brush along trail between Quicksilver and the McDonald trestle. After MTC volunteers spent the rest of the Spring and Summer clearing rail road ties, cleaning debris and installing gates, the township forces graded, improved drainage, and put down trail surface over three miles of new trail. They used materials purchased by the MTC (from Rib Cook-Off beer serving proceeds and IKEA race donations). Work was completed in late November, and although the official opening ceremony will await better weather, it is now open for use.



After protracted procedures involving township approvals and state funding reviews, a contract was awarded in late October for construction of 1.3 miles of new trail in South Park Township. This includes a major item of earthwork: a new auto ramp down to the trail from Triphammer Road. Although the contractor should complete his work in December, several major items of volunteer work, especially the decking of a 60-foot bridge over Piney Fork, remain before this segment is opened in Spring 1997. This work was funded by a state Keystone Grant, matched by County Regional Asset District funds.

Our Trail Volunteers contributed mightily to our progress this year. The Cecil Friends completed the development, begun last year, of the trail for 1.2 miles east of Hendersonville. Except for help from Cecil Township in hauling surface material, they did it all themselves. Volunteers in the airport area, aided by Findlay Township, restored flood damage, including restoring eroded stream bank at Enlow.

Our ongoing battle with the PA Public Utilities Commission to save our bridges continues. The PA Supreme Court, after our appeal, ordered further hearings by the PUC, and Gov. Ridge has since ordered that PADOT and DCNR cooperate as much as possible in preserving rail-trail spans. We may yet prevail! Also on bridges, the MTC acquired three spans this year. One, a 70'

span surplus from the set of the film "Desperate Measures", starring Michael Keaton, was donated by the film company. The other two, 100' and 125', were purchased very cheaply from a steel mill demolition in Monesson.

We have now acquired all but about \$9,000 of the \$250,000 necessary as our match for our promised \$1,000,000 matching Federal funds under the ISTE program. (Hurrah for the grant application efforts of Stan Sattinger and a few others) The first step toward authorization to spend these funds is completion of an environmental assessment of the trail project, followed by review and approval of this by PADOT and the Feds. The assessment should be complete by mid-'97. We hope the review will take less than a year!

What have we to look forward to in 1997? As always, much depends on availability of funding. We must preserve our \$250k ISTE match, lest it be unavailable when we are cleared to use it, so until then we must raise other funds for whatever we do. We hope to acquire some critical right-of-way west of Clairton with anticipated Regional Asset District money. We may see some construction support from the Air Force Reserve, probably south of Noblestown Road, but we must pay for materials used and as yet we don't have that money in hand. As always, we will accomplish as much as we can, as cheaply as we can. ♦



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**FREE ISSUE OF
THE SAME PAGE
"PENNSYLVANIA'S LAND
CONSERVATION AND TRAIL
NEWSLETTER"
INSIDE**



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**MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER
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The Montour Trail Council is an *all volunteer* organization founded in 1989 to convert the abandoned Montour Railroad right of way and the abandoned Peters Creek Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad into a fifty-five mile recreational trail for non-motorized activity regardless of physical ability or financial wherewithal.

EDITOR'S OBSERVATIONS

Sorry for missing the November/December issue of the newsletter but I had a few other commitments to take care of at the time. I hope no one lost any sleep when it didn't arrive, but if you did, blame me not the Trail Council.

This issue includes a supplement called The Same Page. It is an effort by many of the trail and land conservation organizations in Pennsylvania to keep each other's membership up to date with many of the goings on in the State. Fortunately for me, they cover a few of the topics that I was going to touch on in this issue. The editors seem like a competent bunch, but I'm still trying to figure out who this "Will Star" is that was saved on the Montour Trail by a movie bridge (G).

The Montour Trail Council has many projects planned for this year. As usual, we have to play a waiting game to see how many of our grant applications are approved before anything is final. The wish list includes:

Building more trail from Rt. 980 at Quicksilver back toward Champion at Rt.22.

Getting started on a bridge over Rt.980 at the same spot.
Rebuilding a bridge on the Brownsville/Library section of the Trail.

Acquiring a large parcel of property that will take us from Rt.51 into Clairton.

Getting a new bridge at Hendersonville.

Most of these projects will be funded through grants which have already been applied for but not yet approved. The total cost to do all these projects is estimated to be around \$160,000. If all the grants come through we will still need about \$28,000 in matching funds. The good news is that we have all but about \$9,000 of our \$250,000 ISTE A matching funds lined up. The bad news is that it might still be another year until we can break any of the ISTE A grant money loose due to bureaucratic red tape. See the story on page 7 that tells how much it would cost to finish the Trail using contractors instead of volunteers.

Tim

Letters

THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER welcomes all questions and comments. Please send all correspondence to the address on the left.

January						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

Calendar

February						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	

- ♦ **MTC Board Meeting**, every **third Monday** of the month - Second floor of Chartiers Valley High School, in the Library. Turn left off of the Kirwan Heights exit of I-79. Turn left at the next light, go under the Interstate, and the school is on your left. Call Marshall at 531-8628 for more information or to get on the agenda.
- ♦ **Cecil Friends of the Trail meeting**, every **first Tuesday** of the month - in the Boy Scout room at the Cecil American Legion, Rt. 50, 7:30. Call 221-6406
- ♦ **Work & Clean-up party**, Cecil segment, every **third Saturday** of the month - **9:00 am**. Meet at the Kernick Tract parking area. Call 221-6406 for more information. (Begins again in April)
- ♦ **Moon/Robinson Friends of the Trail meeting**, Every Wednesday before the second Saturday of the month at 7:00. At the All Occasion Catering party room near the intersection of Silver Lane and Clever Rd.s in Robinson Twp. Anyone from the communities near Moon and Robinson are encouraged to attend. Call 859-3020 more information.
- ♦ **Work & Clean-up party**, Moon/Robinson segment, every **second Saturday** of the month - **9:00am**. Meet at North Star Petroleum (Formerly Robinson Petroleum). Call 262-3748 for more information. (Begins again in April)
- ♦ **Findlay/ North Fayette Friends of the Trail** Call Don at 899-3695 for more information.
- ♦ **Work & Clean-up party**, Findlay/North Fayette segment, every **forth Saturday** of the month - **9:00 am**. Meet at the Enlow Ballfield. Call 695-2354 for more information. (Begins again in April)

See this space next issue for news of:
Official grand opening in Robinson Twp. and South Park
Annual Trout Fishing Tournament 1 week after opening day!

A Friend on the Trail

by Frank Keppel, Jr.

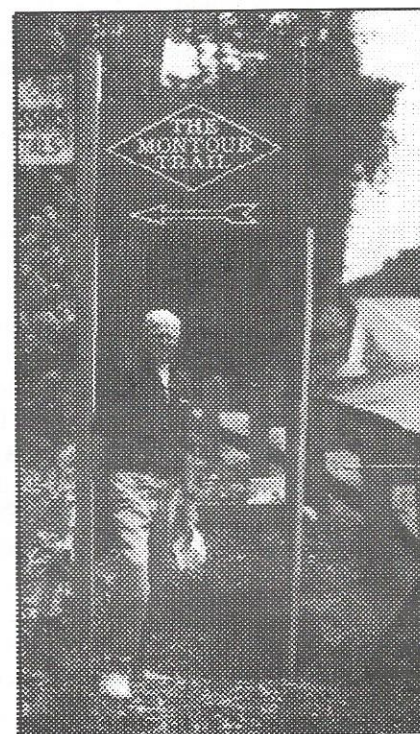
In the Spring of the year, I was enjoying the pleasantries of the Trail, the emerging foliage, and native wildlife. I always tried to exchange greetings to others, this is when I met a Friend on the Trail.

In the Summer of the year, as the fullness of the flowers and trees would show themselves, the Friend would be busy and tireless in his efforts of work for the Trail.

In the Fall of the year, as nature was displaying the vibrant splendor of color and bounty, the Trail became more and more enjoyable for my Friend and me. As the season slowed, so too had the Friend.

In the Winter of the year, activity had slowed on the Trail. The cold beauty of the Trail was fast approaching. The days had shortened to a precious few hours a day. Fewer and fewer people were using the Trail. I did not see my Friend, but learned that the Friend had passed on. I think of the Friend and wonder, "who will next be a Friend on the Trail?"

Dedicated to the memory of Charles "Chuck" McChesney



Chuck McChesney



Montour Trail Council Annual Meeting - 11/10/96

by Dennis Pfeiffer

The Montour Trail Council held its annual meeting on Saturday, November 10, 1996 at the Quicksilver Country club. Through the efforts of meeting chairwoman Judy Thompson the meeting was a huge success and very well attended.

Marshall Fausold, MTC President, opened the meeting with a summary of the construction progress during the year. Construction advanced on three fronts during the year. In South Park Township ground was broken for the first segment of the Montour Trail in Eastern Allegheny County. A contract for \$156,000 was awarded to Tedesco & Son for grading, drainage and surfacing of a 1.5 mile section between Stewart Road and Triphammer Road. This section is almost complete except for a vehicle ramp from Triphammer road and a trail ramp from Stewart road. Also to be completed by volunteers is the decking of the Piney Fork bridge and erecting split rail fencing. The formal opening will be in the Spring of 1997.

Robinson Township in Washington County informed the MTC that they would like to see trail development in their township. Accordingly a MTC volunteer force began removing old ties and trash from a three mile section. The trash was taken to BFI which donated the use of their landfill. After priority obligations were complete, the Robinson Township road crew completed grading and drainage improvements in September. In October Robinson Township laid the surface material in the three mile section between Noblestown Road and the Rt. 980 crossing at Quicksilver. (The material was purchased with moneys received from the Rib Cook Off and the IKEA Half Marathon.) This section should be unofficially opened by Thanksgiving. The formal opening will be in early 1997.

The determined volunteers of the Cecil Township Friends of the Trail pursued their efforts begun last year to open a mile of trail east of Hendersonville. This was completed in October, as surface material salvaged from the Meadowlands race-track, was spread and fencing was erected. Efforts to fund the erection of a replacement bridge at Hendersonville to connect this new segment to the older four mile section will have a priority.

Marshall Fausold then introduced Molly Brovard from IKEA who along with Don Fox were the IKEA race coordinators. Molly proceeded to discuss the highly successful IKEA 1/2 Marathon

and 5k run & walk. The race started as an idea brought to IKEA by Don Fox who is the director of a race in the North Hills. Ikea formed a race committee and obtained the support of the MTC, Police Departments and Paramedics in the area. In addition Mellon Network Services donated \$1500, Kyodo West provided radio communications, Imperial Bike Rental provided lighting for the tunnel, Park West Maintenance expanded the 1/2 mile & 5k trail turnarounds and Wendy's, Burger King and McDonald's provided cups cookies and orange drinks for the runners. Also providing water station

ns were Boy Scout Troop #830, the Outdoor Wilderness Leadership Association at Chatham, North Fayette Parks and Recreation and Mellon Network Services. The MTC provided about 40 volunteers, who arrived at 5:30am!, to man all intersections along the trail and to deliver the water to the stations. Finally, IKEA workers prepared the wooden vinyl course signs, generated a computer list of all runners, prepared 800 packets for the participants, filled the water containers, directed traffic, provided security, and served 1,300 post-race breakfasts in the IKEA restaurant. In all, nearly 200 volunteers worked together to make this event successful. Molly went on to say that 901 individuals registered for the event with 800 of those participating. There were runners from 13 states with the majority coming from PA, West Virginia and Ohio. As promised IKEA stated that they would donate any proceeds to the Montour Trail. Thus representatives from IKEA presented Marshall Fausold a check for \$4,000!.

Marshall Fausold proceeded to announce the newly elected MTC board members. They were Janet Swanson, Frank Keppel, Paul Merther, Stan Sattinger, Ford Shankle and Stan Siranovich. Marshall and the attendees congratulated all of the new board with thunderous applause.

The featured speaker, Carol Finelly of Pittsburgh radio traffic report fame, then spoke. She congratulated the Montour Trail on their success. While she only had a brief ride on the trail she promised to return for a longer ride. She totally enjoyed the trail.

Marshall Fausold ended the meeting wishing everyone a successful 1997 trail year.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| ☆ Blaine Aikin | ☆ Nancy Mullen |
| ☆ Spencer R. Ankney | ☆ Bill Pachesky |
| ☆ Janice L. Baxendell | ☆ Thomas J. Parme |
| ☆ Richard Blaskiewicz | ☆ Michael A. Powers |
| ☆ Sharon Bredel | ☆ Kathleen E. Quasey |
| ☆ Gregory A. Brzozowski | ☆ Al Remaly |
| ☆ Gary & Carole
Buffington | ☆ Carole Robbins |
| ☆ Amy W. Cohen | ☆ Elizabeth Anne Rura |
| ☆ Joan K. Fox | ☆ John M. Sirkoch |
| ☆ William Hagedorn | ☆ Mrs. Agnes L. Wagner |
| ☆ Roger Hartung | ☆ Ned Williams |
| ☆ Gail Hopper | ☆ Barbara Wolfe |
| ☆ Beth Hovanec | ☆ Donna Jean Zetz |
| ☆ Lee & Ellen Jackson | ☆ Anna Marie Zupancic |

The Montour Trail Council would like to welcome these new members and thank them for their support. We would also like to thank all our members who have renewed their membership and remind all that a growing membership is one of the criteria foundations look for when we apply for grants.



photo by Bill Morphy

It was no easy task getting the Coraopolis Gazebo to its new resting place on the Montour Trail, but the Trail volunteers were up to the task (along with a little help from Jake Phillips Crane and Equipment Rental and Lex Camesi and Rob Cronin with their tow trucks from Airport Auto Body). The next project is to settle on the exact location near the Park Manor Blvd./Montour Run Rd. intersection and build a foundation for it. Then it will have to be lifted again for the last time. ◆

Yes, I want to help build the Montour Trail!

- ☐ I want to spread the word. Please send me additional flyers.
- ☐ I have written my Legislator and County Commissioners asking them to support the trail.
- ☐ My organization would like to provide a letter of endorsement.
- ☐ I know a group interested in a presentation.
- ☐ I wish to become a member of the Montour Trail Council.

<input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT	\$5
<input type="checkbox"/> INDIVIDUAL	\$15
<input type="checkbox"/> FAMILY	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> ORGANIZATION	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> SUPPORTING	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> SUSTAINING	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> BENEFACTOR	\$250 + up

(Membership is tax deductible)

- ☐ I wish to make an additional tax deductible contribution of \$_____ to the Montour Trail Council to help make the Montour Trail a reality.

(Make your check payable to the Montour Trail Council)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (day time) _____ (evening) _____

By applying for membership in the Montour Trail Council, I indicate my support of its goals.

SIGNATURE _____

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling tollfree, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Please fill out this application and return it with your check to:

MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 11866
PITTSBURGH PA. 15228-0866

**DON'T FORGET! The Montour Trail Council
may be designated as your United Way Contributor
Choice option #3308 where you work.**

New 3 mile section in Robinson, Washington County is ready to use. Grand opening in the Spring

text and photos by Tim Killmeyer

The Robinson Twp. road crew has completed putting the surface material down on a new three mile section of the Montour Trail in Washington County. The surface material was paid for with funds received from our work at the Allegheny Rib Cook-Off and from the IKEA 1/2 Marathon, supplemented by money out of the MTC general operating expenses.



Gary Greene, of the Robinson Township road crew, puts down surface material to complete the new section.

In early Spring of 1996, after the Robinson road crew cut back the brush along the side of the right of way, the volunteers took over. For several months thereafter they moved railroad ties out of ditches and off the side of the Trail to prepare it for grading and ditch digging by the road crew.

Meanwhile, the township road crew replaced several culverts (purchased by the MTC) under the Trail to improve drainage. The volunteers spent even more weekends picking up trash and hauling it to the BFI landfill just up the road in Findlay Twp. At least 12 trips were necessary. This involved loading all kinds of material (including the kitchen sink and stove) onto our stake truck. Unfortunately, using this kind of truck required them to offload by hand once they reached the landfill. By late summer the road crew was able to make several passes with its grade-all machine (the tires of which showed great propensity for finding lost railroad spikes) and improve the drainage ditches.

In late September the final surface began to be applied by the road crew and within weeks the Trail was ready to use. Because of the lack of a newsletter in November use of this section is very light. If you think the part of the Trail that you use regularly is

getting crowded, it would be worth your while to stop out and see this mostly rural three miles.

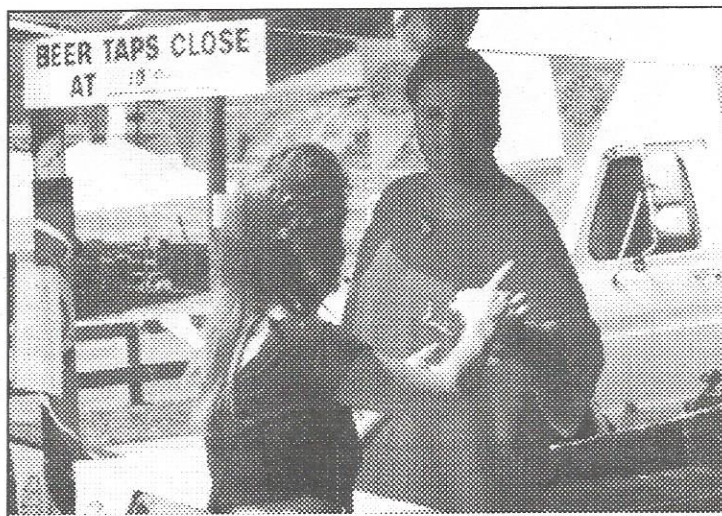
Mile markers, permanent rules signs, and improved parking areas will be added this Spring and an "official" opening is being planned.

To get to the new Robinson section, follow Noblestown Rd. out of Carnegie all the way to McDonald. Go all the way through McDonald and keep straight past where Rt. 980 turns to the right. There is a sign for Trail parking immediately on your left. The trailhead is across the road from the parking area.

You can also take Rt. 22 to the McDonald Exit. Follow Rt. 980 toward McDonald about 2 1/2 miles. Just past Quicksilver road on your right is a Trail parking sign. Go up the little gravel hill and you will be at the trailhead.

The Montour Trail Council would like to thank the supervisors of Robinson Twp., Washington County, Jerry Runtas, James Dewey, and George Lucchino for their support. Kudos also to their fine road crew who did an excellent job throughout the year. And once again, Mike Christ and the BFI landfill in Findlay Twp. deserve special thanks for donating landfill space so that we could make the Montour Trail a pleasant experience for all. And last, but not least, the volunteers who worked the rib cook-off and the 1/2 marathon, those who gave up their Saturdays to get this new section in shape and those who give monetarily to help pay for materials.

THIS TRAIL'S FOR YOU!!!!



Gary McKenzie of Cecil Twp. spent his whole Labor Day weekend pouring beer to help raise money for the Montour Trail. He said his job prevents him from helping other times, so he was glad to do it.

Engineering study provides cost starting point for Pittsburgh to Washington D.C. connection

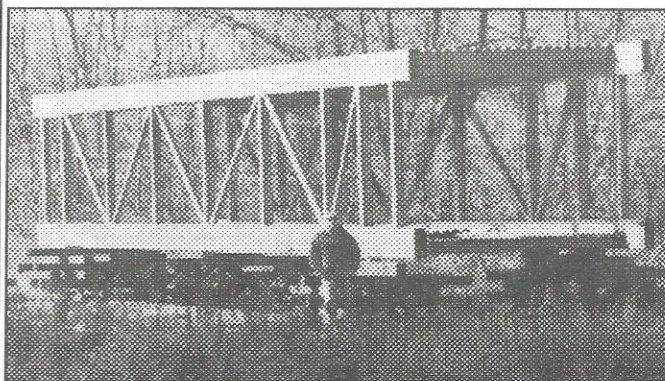
On November 25, 1996, Mackin Engineering of Pittsburgh presented to the Allegheny Trail Alliance Master Implementation Plan for the completion of the long dreamed of Pittsburgh to Washington D.C. trail. The engineers drove, biked, and walked every uncompleted section of the route. Then, using current construction costs, they broke down the trails into sections, evaluated their condition, and calculated what each section would cost to build. These figures can now be used to conduct a united fundraising front by the contributors to the study. The members of the Allegheny Trail Alliance include: Allegheny Highlands Trail - Md; Allegheny Highlands Trail - Pa.; Youghiogheny River Trail - South; Youghiogheny River Trail - North; Montour Trail; Steel Heritage Trail; Three Rivers Heritage Trail.

Because the Montour Trail is always in a state of construction, some of the plan is already out of date. But here are some of the costs associated with completing the Montour. Keep in mind that these figures should be considered a "worst case" scenario using ALL contracted labor for the work. For example, the report lists the 6 mile section from the McDonald Trestle (Viaduct) back to Mile 11 at Potato Garden Run and Boggs Rd. as costing \$1,170,432 to complete. That's \$195,072 per mile. (That includes \$260,000 to renovate the trestle alone.) With the involvement of Robinson Twp. and using volunteer labor, we completed three miles of that stretch for a total of about \$25,000. (There were no bridges along that section.) But we are pretty certain that if enough grant money was obtained to let hired contractors do the work, the volunteers would gladly make use of the Trail instead of building it. Here's what we need:

Segment Name	Mileage	Segment Cost
Clairton to Rt. 51	2.5	\$406,164
Rt. 51 to Gill Hall Rd.	3.7	\$338,289
Gill Hall Rd. to Stewart Rd.	3.78	\$583,813
Stewart Rd. to Arrowhead	2.7	\$640,127
Arrowhead Trail to Wash. Pike	4.16	\$1,000,993
Cecil Twp. Park to McD. Trestle	5.3	\$750,882
McD. Trestle to Potato G. Run	6	\$1,170,432
Montour St. (Mile 0) to Coraop.	0.83	\$134,409

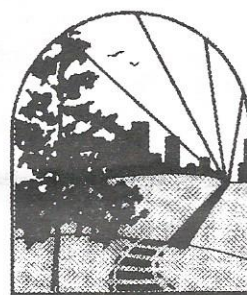
Total \$5,025,049

That's all we need, so if you know any millionaires or somebody looking for a GREAT tax deduction - send them our way! Until then, keep up the good volunteer work. ♦



Tim Kelly of Westwood stands in front of one of the Montour Trail's latest bridge acquisitions - a 10' x70' covered bridge used in the movie "Desperate Measures," starring hometown boy, Michael Keaton. Until a permanent site is selected for the bridge, you can have your picture taken on it by walking or biking to Mile 11 1/2 on the Trail.

Pennsylvania Rails-to-Trails license plates available soon



**RAILS
-TO-
TRAILS**
CONSERVANCY

Soon you will be able to show your support for the Rails-to-Trails movement by displaying a special RTC license plate on the back bumper of your vehicle. Just call, write, or send an e-mail message to the Pennsylvania office of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy for an application. These are official Pennsylvania license plates so they need a minimum of three hundred applications to get the ball rolling. Order yours today!

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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105 Locust St.

Harrisburg, PA 17101

(717)238-1717 / Fax: (717) 238-7566

RTC of PA@aol.com



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This guy must think it's going to be a long winter by the look of that stack of wood he has on his bike!

