A young man and woman are laughing together in front of a store. The man is on the right, wearing a dark sweater, and the woman is on the left, wearing a purple top. They are both smiling broadly. In the background, there is a sign that says "GIFTS" in large yellow letters on a blue background. The overall atmosphere is joyful and nostalgic.

COLLEGE CONNECTION

By Blake Vossekuil

It's been nearly a decade since I first saw Penn State. I didn't originally plan to go to school there. I wanted a city school, not cow pastures and football. But when I drove through the campus the summer after high school graduation, I felt what other PSU students had told me I'd feel – magic.

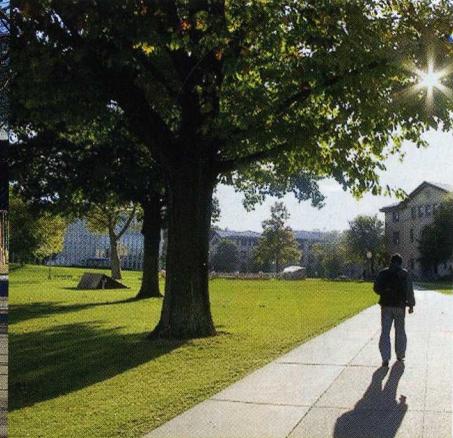
SHOPPING ON MAIN STREET IN CLARION, NEAR CLARION UNIVERSITY



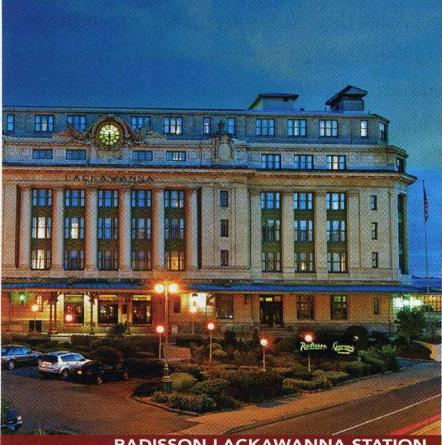
SUBURBAN SQUARE IN ARDMORE,
NEAR HAVERFORD COLLEGE



LEWISBURG ICE FEST,
NEAR BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY



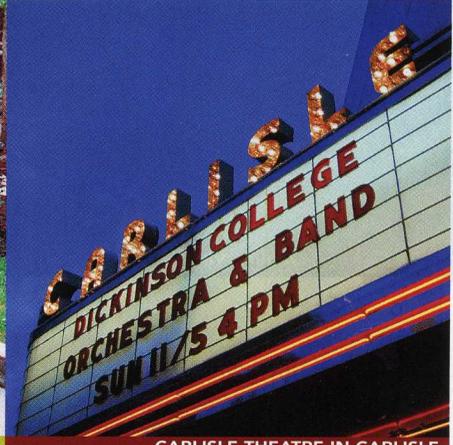
CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY
IN PITTSBURGH



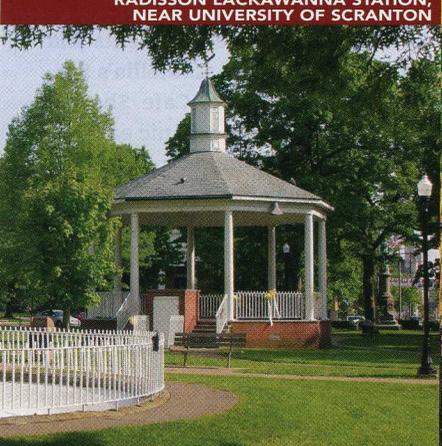
RADISSON LACKAWANNA STATION,
NEAR UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON



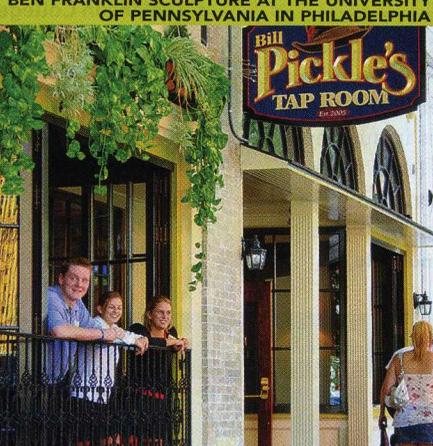
BEN FRANKLIN SCULPTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY
OF PENNSYLVANIA IN PHILADELPHIA



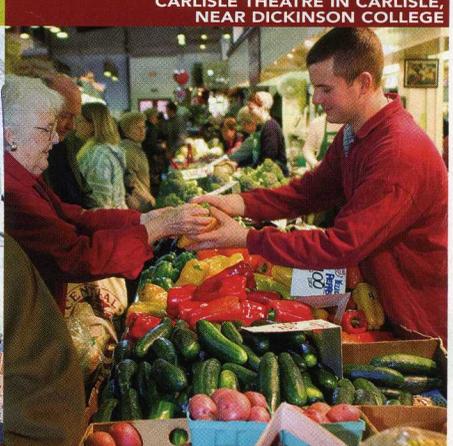
CARLISLE THEATRE IN CARLISLE,
NEAR DICKINSON COLLEGE



DIAMOND PARK IN MEADVILLE,
NEAR ALLEGHENY COLLEGE



BILL PICKLE'S IN STATE COLLEGE,
NEAR PENN STATE UNIVERSITY



CENTRAL MARKET IN LANCASTER,
NEAR FRANKLIN & MARSHALL COLLEGE

THE ALLEGHENIES AND HER VALLEYS:

Penn State University, University Park

Penn State may sit "in the middle of nowhere," but you'd certainly never know it. Bill Pickle's Tap Room offers a DJ, good beer and comfort food. Head off-campus to the American Ale House & Grill (renovated a couple of years ago) then reserve a room at the Colonial-style Nittany Lion Inn or at the traditional Atherton Hotel. Learn about the legendary Nittany Lions from every sport at the Penn State All Sports Museum, located at the southwest corner of Beaver Stadium. The annual Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts held every July is also a must. **MORE>> www.psu.edu**

Eclectic galleries, small niche museums, lively cafés have sprung up to support

PHILADELPHIA AND THE COUNTRYSIDE:

Haverford College

Guided by Quaker values, Haverford College is in a thriving suburb with a cultural scene. Haverford and the Main Line are chock-full of shopping including the women's boutique *Katye K* plus nearby *Suburban Square*. Hit up *Ardmore Farmer's Market* for Amish goods or dine at *Berwyn's Nectar* for Asian-fusion cuisine. Spend the night at the luxurious *Radnor Hotel* in St. David's or the charming, *Wayne Hotel*, on the National Register of Historic Places. **MORE>>** www.haverford.edu

Lafayette College

Two hours north of Philly is Easton, home of Lafayette College. Visit *Centre Square*, the nearby *Crayola Learning Center* and the *National Canal Museum*. Dine at *Valenca*, a Portuguese restaurant or *Pearly Baker's Alehouse*, known for its burgers and live music. Swing by art gallery/gift shop *Connexions* or upscale baby boutique *Baby Gift Clouds*. **MORE>>** www.lafayette.edu

DUTCH COUNTRY ROADS:

Dickinson College

Carlisle boasts Dickinson College, where students and locals alike eat at *Amy's Thai Cuisine*, *Camellia's Sin Tea Parlor & Gift Shop* or the *Back Door Cafe*. Shop for women's apparel at the *Clothes Vine*, organic eats at *Appalachian Whole Foods Market* and more than 100 antiques vendors at *Bedford Street Antiques*. Before settling in for the night at the *Hotel Carlisle*, get tickets for a show at the circa-1939, art deco-style *Carlisle Theatre*, home to the *Carlisle Regional Performing Arts Center*.

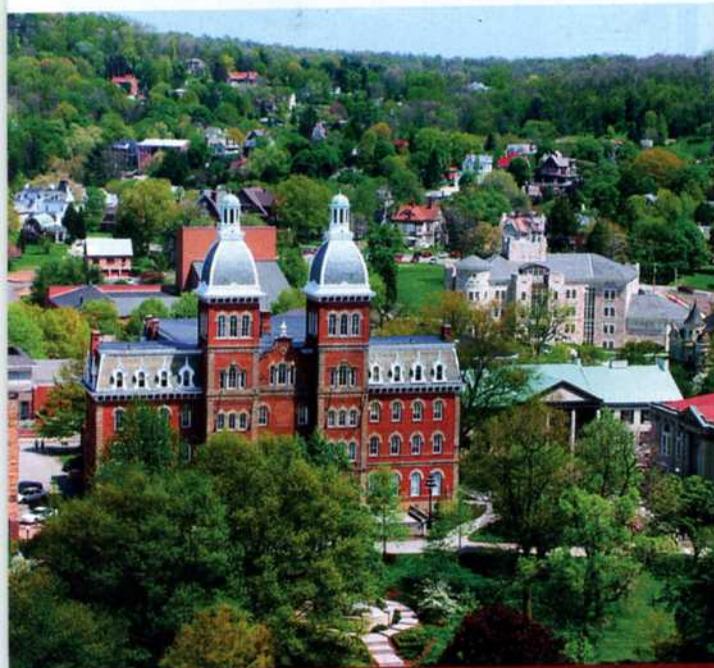
MORE>> www.dickinson.edu

Franklin & Marshall College

Franklin & Marshall College is located in Lancaster where you'll find *The Lancaster Brewing Company* and *Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant*.

During the day, make plans for a tour at the *Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania* or an authentic Amish farm at the *Amish Farm & House*. Better yet, walk through the *Lancaster Central Market*, offering a whirlwind of food from Amish to Greek to Thai and Middle Eastern. For a night's rest, try the *Lancaster Arts Hotel* in the heart of downtown.

MORE>> www.fandm.edu



AERIAL VIEW OF WASHINGTON & JEFFERSON COLLEGE

Bucknell University

Just 45 minutes from Penn State, you'll find Lewisburg and Bucknell University. You can attend the *Heart of Lewisburg Ice Festival*, where you can see dozens of sparkling ice sculptures along *Market Street*. Later, relax in the historic *Lewisburg Hotel*, a restored mid-19th-century hotel. Then make a reservation at the *Bull Run Inn*, a favorite for clam bakes in summertime and wing nights throughout the year. From there, make your way to the *Campus Theater*, a single-screen theater, followed by late-night jazz (Friday nights only) at *7th Street Cafe*. **MORE>>** www.bucknell.edu

FIND THESE GREAT COLLEGE TOWNS



The numbers on the map relate to the green numbers in the story.

good ethnic restaurants, and Pennsylvania's college towns.

PITTSBURGH AND ITS COUNTRYSIDE:

Washington & Jefferson College

This co-ed, liberal arts college is just 30 miles south of Pittsburgh in Washington County, which is also home to 23 covered bridges. For an extra dose of history, swing by the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum or the LeMoyné House, which was part of the Underground Railroad. Grab a quick lunch at Shorty's, known for its amazing hotdogs and then dinner at Alfano's at The Quail – one you'll want to save room for. Later on, unwind in your gracefully appointed room at Grammy Rose's Bed & Breakfast. **MORE>>** www.washjeff.edu

PENNSYLVANIA WILDS:

Clarion University

Along the banks of the Clarion River, Clarion University and the community are thriving. In the fall, come for the National City Autumn Leaf Festival, with food and art among the brilliant foliage. Enjoy a cappuccino with a side of art at Michelle's Cafe, or for something heartier, try the Captain Loomis Inn, which is known for its Prime rib. Two great options for lodging include the elegant 21-acre Clarion River Ridge Resort and Spa and turn-of-the-century Clarion House Bed & Breakfast downtown. **MORE>>** www.clarion.edu

NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA MOUNTAINS:

University of Scranton

Founded in 1888 as Saint Thomas College, the University of Scranton is a cornerstone of Electric City. *Le Festa Italiana* kicks off Labor Day with a celebration of Italian culture and cuisine. Venture 300 feet below the earth's surface during a Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour or bring the whole family to the Houdini Tour & Magic Show. Find fine continental fare at Carmen's Restaurant located in the Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel, where you'll want to retire later on in the evening. **MORE>>** www.scranton.edu

PENNSYLVANIA'S GREAT LAKES REGION:

Allegheny College

Meadville is home to Allegheny College, a 544-acre college founded in 1788. Splurge on a hot dog at Eddie's Footlong Hot Dogs, a city tradition. Pick up fresh-baked artisan bread at Creative Crust and stop in Hank's Frozen Custard, which has been making extra-rich custard since 1952. For sit-down dining, opt for cocktails at Meadville Town Tavern, then walk over to Julian's Bar and Grill for dinner. During the day, shop @ The Bank and then retire for a night's sleep at the Bethaven Inn or Wynken Blynken & Nod. **MORE>>** www.allegheny.edu



CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF ART IN PITTSBURGH

PHILADELPHIA AND PITTSBURGH

While the rest of the state's university towns have countless activities, don't forget Pennsylvania's biggest cities, which are home to more than two dozen colleges.

- » **PHILADELPHIA:** America's sixth largest city is home to several fine universities (University of Pennsylvania, Temple, Villanova, St. Joseph's, Drexel and La Salle) and a host of attractions. Shop near Rittenhouse Square, Walnut Street, Antique Row and Old City. Make reservations at the BYOB Matyson or dine *al fresco* at Parc. Be a true Philadelphian and try a cheesesteak at Pat's or Geno's in South Philly. The whole family will love touring historic Independence Hall or the National Constitution Center. And, be sure to save time for the Philadelphia Museum of Art.
- » **PITTSBURGH:** Home to Carnegie Mellon, Duquesne, and Pitt, this western Pennsylvania city boasts the Phipps Conservancy and Botanical Gardens, Carnegie Museum of Art and the Heinz History Center. It's worth walking around the ethnic shops of the Strip District followed by a visit to Primanti Bros. Spend the night at the historic Renaissance Pittsburgh Hotel.