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Redistricting focus of run

**By Elizabeth Kohler
Gazette Staff Writer**

Despite foul weather, a suburban Philadelphia man made his way through Bedford County Friday as part of his one lap around Pennsylvania to awareness about political redistricting.

Mathison, 51, of Radnor Township, a suburb of Philadelphia, started this 1,000 mile trek a week ago on April 1 from the War memorial near downtown Wayne pushing a customized, fully loaded jogging stroller.

"The purpose of this is to raise awareness of political redistricting and to help inspire reform," said Mathison, as he explained that April 1 was the deadline for the U.S. Census Bureau to release all the data required for nationwide redistricting. "The big thing is to see no gerrymandering."

"The specific goal of 2011 Pennsylvania redistricting should be transparency in the process and compactness in shape of the resulting districts," he went on to explain.

Mathison also carries a baton, on loan from the Radnor High School track team, to symbolically hand off to those would help to fulfill the goal of the run.

While Mathison has no specific end date, he expressed that 50 days would be a nice number to complete the run. "I average about 20 miles a day, sometimes 30, but I'm also going through a very mountainous part of the state right now."

Of course being a lone [runner] pushing a baby stroller comes with some curiosity, and concern, as Mathison relates a story about being stopped by a state trooper Friday near UPMC Bedford Memorial.

"It was a couple of hours ago when a state trooper pulled over and thought I had a baby in the stroller," Mathison said. "The officer was going to offer me assistance to get the child to the hospital until she realized there wasn't

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Gazette Photo/Elizabeth Kohler

Paul Mathison of Radnor Township, a suburb of Philadelphia, was spotted on his 1,000 mile trek around Pennsylvania in rainy Wolfsburg Friday afternoon. Mathison is participating in the PennUltimate Run to raise awareness about congressional [and legislative] redistricting and to inspire reform in this once-a-decade process. Mathison planned to spend Friday night at the Shawnee Inn and continue his journey along Route 30 this morning.

Redistricting . . .

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one in the stroller and I explained what I was doing.”

The stroller does lack a child, but it contains a lot of things to help Mathison along the way. The stroller contains a smartphone, solar-powered battery charger, spare running shoes, spare inner tubes, reading glasses, a bear bag, aspirin and many more items, including camping gear, just in case there’s not a hotel along the route.

“I’m prepared for anything,” he said, laughing that maybe not quite mentally prepared.

“I’ve been insane all my life,” Mathison laughed about his motivation to do the run. “I’m 51-years-old, times running out and there’s converging circumstances so I’m doing it.”

Mathison said he is also a long-distance runner and has worked at a consulting firm that deals with government affairs.

For more information or to follow Mathison on his run visit www.pjmathison.com/pennultimate run. The run can also be found on Facebook and Twitter and there is GPS tracking to see Mathison’s progress.