



## OPPORTUNITY & ADVENTURE

PITTSBURGH HAS ALWAYS HAD ITS SHARE OF NEIGHBORHOOD BARS AND RESTAURANTS THAT REFLECTED THE CHARACTER OF THEIR DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES. BUT TODAY, THE CITY OFFERS A WEALTH OF TRENDY HANG-OUT SPOTS, EATERIES AND ENTERTAINMENT VENUES, WITH SOMETHING AVAILABLE FOR ALMOST EVERY TASTE. AS ONE LOCAL COLLEGE STUDENT DEMONSTRATES, IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TAKING THE TIME TO EXPLORE. BY KELSEY HUGHES

**A**s a student at the University of Pittsburgh, my usual scene is the mild bustle of South Oakland. I roam the grungy yet beloved streets and often stay close to Forbes Avenue, which is lined with affordable restaurants and serves as a straight shot to my favorite place on campus, the imposing Cathedral of Learning. ■ Just as many people often stick to what they know, what is comfortable, I burrow easily into Oakland's business hub as if it were a warm bed on a cold day. That's why I must frequently remind myself I do not go to the "University of Oakland." Instead, I live in a city of culturally diverse neighborhoods, connected by bridges and mass transit and filled with community-minded people. ■ While the opportunities for social adventures in Pittsburgh are endless—from hip restaurants and nightlife to museum exhibitions and gallery crawls—sometimes only those "in the know" know where to find them. Writers might stay on top of the best haunts for a night of readings and spoken word, while the foodies can tell you about the dives or upscale cafés offering the tastiest fare in town. But what makes Pittsburgh truly special are the events that bring together people from different backgrounds and interests into the same location in a spirit of creativity, entertainment and innovation.





GARFIELD WAS ONCE A NEIGHBORHOOD MANY COMMUTERS QUICKLY DROVE THROUGH. TODAY ITS EDGINESS HAS A HIP SIDE, THANKS TO POPULAR EVENTS SUCH AS THE UNBLURRED ART CRAWL. THE WALKING TOUR INCLUDES A STOP AT GARFIELD ARTWORKS, WHERE TARA FORAN AND SHAAN SADIQ EXAMINE THE DIFFERENT PAINTING STYLES HANGING ON A WALL.

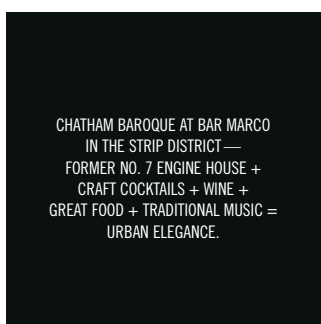
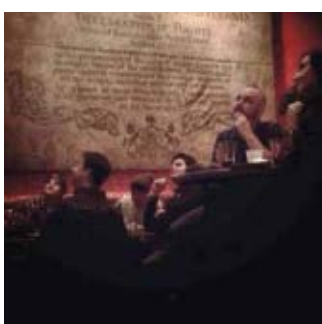
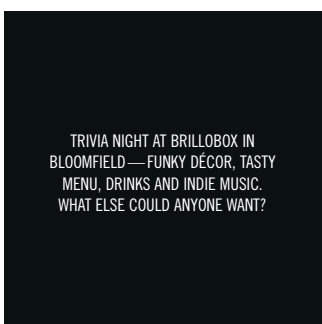
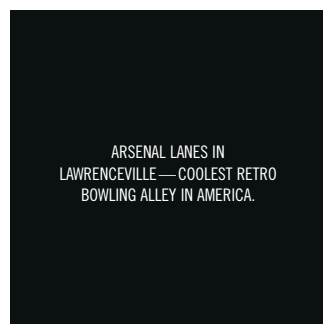
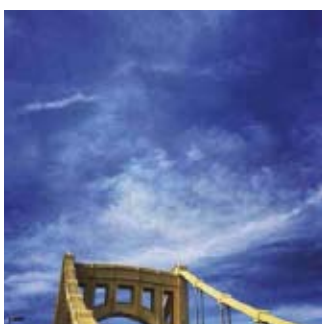
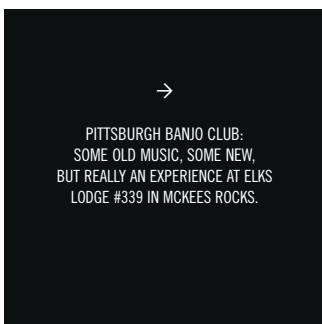
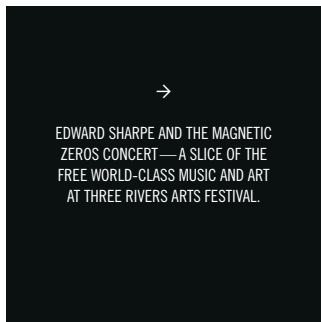
Every first Friday of the month, Penn Avenue in Garfield ignites with the artistic energy of the Unblurred art crawl. The street is lined with hole-in-the-wall art exhibits and galleries. People of all ages and wearing varied attire — from bohemian earth tones to stylish designer brands — stroll down the street, popping into whatever shop catches their eye. Makeshift cardboard signs are posted on some doors and windows: “Come in. Everyone is welcome!”

And everyone *is* welcome: An eclectic assemblage of individuals gather in the neighborhood, sharing a common interest in exploring art and expanding their minds. This is another side of the city, the side away from the government buildings, corporate boardrooms or even unconventional startup offices. The different ethnicities, ages and cultures stream together to form one Pittsburgh voice — and on this Friday night, I’m deeply moved as I realize I am a part of it.

Walking down Penn Avenue, my friend and I stumble into a mini-flea market — a series of white tents occupied by small businesses, including a taco stand and a woman selling antique jewelry. The street has a quirky vibe, the feeling of “old town” mixed with throbbing metropolis.

The Assemble community space — a nonprofit that connects artists and scientists with curious kids and adults — is especially vibrant. Approaching the bright orange building and stepping inside, we see graffiti sprinkled across the walls, two women playing bongos, and 20-somethings encircling their hips with spin-sparkly, blue hula hoops. In a far right corner, a little girl paints a rainbow on a white tarp, adding to the collection of doodles drawn by others.

More poignant is a display of art with a social awareness message. A poster on a wall shows mug shot-style pictures of about 20 African American men. A sign asks you to guess each man’s age, which have PhDs and which have criminal records. It’s a lesson on racial profiling and digs into the thinking behind how and why we judge people based on appearances.



TO CAPTURE PITTSBURGH'S CURRENT SPIRIT AND ENERGY, BUSINESS INCUBATOR THRILL MILL INC. AND NETWORKING GROUP GLOBAL SHAPERS HUB SPONSORED THE INAUGURAL THRIVAL INNOVATION + MUSIC FESTIVAL AT BAKERY SQUARE PLAZA LAST FALL. A VARIETY OF ORGANIZATIONS AND STARTUPS SHOWCASED THEIR CREATIVE IDEAS TO RESIDENTS, SHAREHOLDERS AND ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS WHILE MUSICIANS SUCH AS DE LA SOUL ENTERTAINED PARTICIPANTS AND VISITORS.

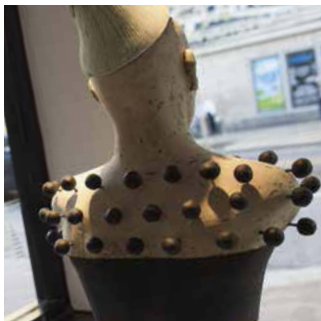


Emmal Alaquiva

J. Altendorfer Photography



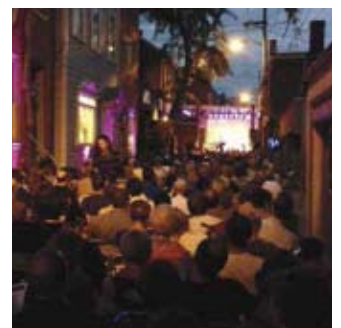
"CONGREGATION" INTERACTIVE ART INSTALLATION IN MARKET SQUARE — BEING IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME.



→  
CINEMA IN THE PARK AT GRANDVIEW PARK IN MOUNT WASHINGTON — GRAB A BLANKET AND ENJOY AN EVENING OF FREE FILMS UNDER THE STARS.



PITTSBURGH IS THE NEW HOLLYWOOD — MOONLIGHT AS AN EXTRA IN THE NEXT BLOCKBUSTER MOVIE.



**W**eekends offer a buffet of recreation and entertainment options in the transformed Steel City. Whether they enjoy hiking, biking, kayaking or even “geocaching” (which, for the uninitiated, involves using a navigational system like GPS to hide or seek containers called “caches”), Pittsburghers, especially the under-40 crowd, are increasingly seeking new adventures across the region’s diverse terrain.

Once walled by steel mills and other factories, Pittsburgh’s rivers now power different signature activities. One local organization, Venture Outdoors, specializes in making the most of the city’s natural assets. On a Friday afternoon, I “venture outdoors” with a friend.

Kayaking along the Allegheny River, I dip one end of the paddle into the water, propelling myself forward. The consecutive, alternating strokes are more choppy than graceful, but it feels liberating all the same. The mechanical action of paddling soon becomes automatic as I take in my surroundings. I watch geese floating five feet away from my boat and a man fishing — he says

for “whatever bites”—in the river. I revel in the gorgeous sunshine reflecting off the water and gaze at the Pittsburgh skyline stretching by, a gleaming and proud backdrop. In the distance, I see the yellow Andy Warhol Bridge, decorated with a striking display of color. It has just been “yarn bombed” with a multi-colored patchwork of knitted and crocheted blankets as part of a project intended to bring together communities with one productive effort.

I float on the river, soaking up the sun and scene. Then I paddle underneath a bridge built for trains, with car after car clacking overhead. The steel wheels screech, and the percussion of sounds seems reminiscent of the city’s industrial past.

Venturing more inland on a sunny Saturday afternoon, I walk through Bakery Square, a new retail and office development in Larimer. Young people have flocked there to participate in the Thrival Innovation + Music Festival. As music pulses in the background, I meet some recent college graduates seeking advice on how to start their own businesses. They mingle with representatives from organizations

dedicated to fostering entrepreneurship in Pittsburgh. At one table, visitors are asked to give feedback about what young people think “propels Pittsburgh.” Splayed across a corkboard are answers such as diversity and inclusion, affordable housing, 24-hour free Wi-Fi coffee shops and a “tough Steel City attitude.” The most common answer, however, is the sense of community.

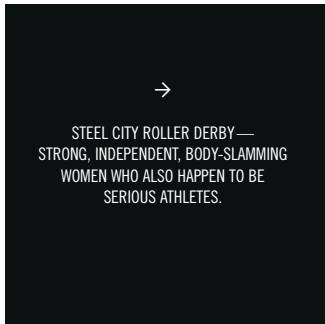
These experiences barely scratch the surface of what’s possible in “the ‘Burgh.” If there is one lesson that I have learned, it is that there is always something for young people to do in this city. While word of mouth is often the strongest PR, it doesn’t take much effort to find somewhere to enjoy an evening out if you just put your favorite search engine to use. But it does take a willingness to explore and an openness to adventure. Besides, what’s the point of living in Pittsburgh if you don’t fully get to know this sometimes funky, sometimes gritty, but always beautiful city? *h*



BAYARDSTOWN SOCIAL CLUB — SUMMER OUTDOOR VENUE IN THE STRIP DISTRICT DESIGNED TO LOOK LIKE A BACKYARD PARTY.



FIREWORKS IN PITTSBURGH — NO NEED TO SAY MORE!



→ STEEL CITY ROLLER DERBY — STRONG, INDEPENDENT, BODY-SLAMMING WOMEN WHO ALSO HAPPEN TO BE SERIOUS ATHLETES.



Dalton Photography

