

Opinion | Top 10 things I will miss about Pittsburgh

By Alex Dolinger, Senior Staff Columnist

Pittsburgh has been a part of my life for many years now. I have fond memories of going to weddings at Soldiers and Sailors as a kid and the inclement weather that always made the weddings suck. I have no idea how long I've been enjoying all the splendor Pittsburgh has to offer, but I do know that I'm saying farewell to this cruel mistress of a city at the end of the summer, and I'm heartbroken.

It's pretty surreal, but I'm graduating college next week. It feels absolutely fake, especially because I still don't even know what homecoming is. I'm so excited to go spread my immense and bizarre knowledge with the unsuspecting citizens of Buffalo, NY, through the City Year program, but saying goodbye to Pittsburgh is going to be a huge bummer. Pittsburgh is special. She is not like other girls. Thus, here are the top 10 things I'll miss the most about her.



Alanna Reid | Staff Photographer

Alex Dolinger will miss the Port Authority buses.

Lawrenceville dogs

I've been blessed to spend time in most of Pittsburgh's lovely neighborhoods, and I've noticed something delightful about one of them. Lawrenceville is just filled to the brim with adorable dogs. I love dogs. The people who walk the dogs always see me fawning over the dogs and bring them over to me for some pats. It's amazing. I think I've mostly met doodles in what I call 'Larryville,' which is unsurprising because you can also make candles and purchase rolled ice cream. You get it. My favorite dog that I met in Larryville was a greyhound named Hank. Hank, if you're reading this, don't forget me.

Themed PAT busses

Port Authority and I are like lovers on "The L Word." She is constantly leaving me out in the cold, both emotionally and literally, but I keep coming back for more. She also connects me with some of the strangest people I have ever met in my life, if only for a moment. Despite the raw fury I have felt every time I realize I am waiting for a 54 that is simply never coming, I soften immediately once I see a 71 that is covered in little hearts. I love art just as much as I love public transit, and despite the fact that I know it's a silly little capitalistic venture, I fall prey to the pride busses every time. I think, "how nice!" and then I text the same thing to my mom.

Colorful locals

I have had some of the most impactful interactions of my life on the sidewalk after 8 p.m. I have a denim jacket with a rainbow that I painted on the back, and a girl that I had never met before came up to me while I was waiting for a bus and had a 15-minute conversation with me about how I should start an Etsy shop. I also once had to tell a woman that her boobs had fallen completely out of the underboob cutout in her dress, and she looked me in the eyes and said "YOLO." Honorable mention to the man who yelled at me out his car window just to say "I see your soul." I'm gonna miss that.

Milkshakes

I don't know if you've noticed, but Pittsburgh is full of delicious milkshakes. We've got The Milkshake Factory, Stack'd, Fudge Farm, Burgatory, Five Guys and probably a bunch of other ones that I can't remember. There are milkshakes everywhere. And they're all pretty different from each other? Somehow? It's my dream come true. I am a boy and I have come to the yard. Parting is such sweet sorrow.

Sorrento's

Sorrento's and I go way back. On my 19th birthday, I told my friends that all I wanted was to go to Sorrento's and take pictures in front of the Oakland mural, and I do not regret that for a second. Sorrento's was my go-to depression meal for an entire year. That ranch got me through some of the worst moments of my life, like the time I slipped on ice and fell all the way down Bates Hill in front of someone and their parents and they laughed at me. The recipe has changed now, but so have I, you know? It's like we changed together. Now I'm 22 and Sorrento's is finally on UberEats. It's all very profound.

Puccini's

One of Sorrento's neighbors also got me through many tough times. Puccini Hair Design has turned all of my bad hair decisions into good ones. They gave me my first pixie cut, making my butch lesbian dreams a reality. Then, I dyed that pixie cut orange because I was beginning my quarter-life crisis. I hated it so much that I cried in the Posvar hall bathroom — the best place to cry on campus — and then Puccini's managed to bleach it all out without all of my hair snapping off. They also did not make me feel like an idiot, even though I was and still am. Everyone there is so nice and I would trust them with my life, because I already trusted them to give me an undercut. That's real.

Multiple Targets

I can't adequately explain to you why this makes me so happy. It's just so nice to have multiple dollar sections. Multiple sets of cashiers who have to see me at my worst. Multiple chances to look for Squishmallows that I don't actually want but still search for every time. Plus, I can get to all of these Targets on PAT buses, which means that I have multiple chances to actually ride the one that's covered in little hearts. I just think it's neat.

South Oakland architecture

I'm a design student, so I'm constantly noticing the good designs that are all around us all the time. Like themed PAT busses. However, I also notice the bad designs. Like most South Oakland apartments. It's not even that the houses are ugly, they are just confusing. There are two houses across the street from me that are not connected, but they are literally two inches apart from each other. Why? There's also some duplex situations but each side of the house looks completely different. What went into that choice? I love the hodge-podge of houses and all the broken glass that surrounds them, but I would just like to see the research photos.

The Cathedral basement

Speaking of being a design student, most of that work has taken place in the basement of the Cathedral. Not floor G, with the Starbucks and oddly configured hallways, but the floor below it, where several construction shops, a theater and sometimes some birds live. The basement was my own little private oasis where I got to paint and burn myself with hot glue alongside some of my closest friends and favorite faculty. No one else seems to know it exists, except for the random people who sometimes show up and ask to sit in the theater in the middle of the day. And the birds. Somehow birds get in there a lot. On a more serious note, that place and the people who frequent it have truly made these last four years the best of my life, and there's no one else I'd rather dodge birds with.

The Pitt News

This one hurts. I've had a long and happy career writing nonsense with some of the kindest and most intelligent people I have ever met. This is my last Pitt News column, and I want to say a sincere thank-you to everyone who's ever taken the time to read my words. I've had so much fun laughing with you on Fridays and occasionally gracing you with a legitimate opinion. I'll leave you with the advice that got me through college, and will continue to get me through life. In the wise words of Paris Hilton, "Believe in yourself and ... everybody's hot."

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