

Yinzer Yarnz

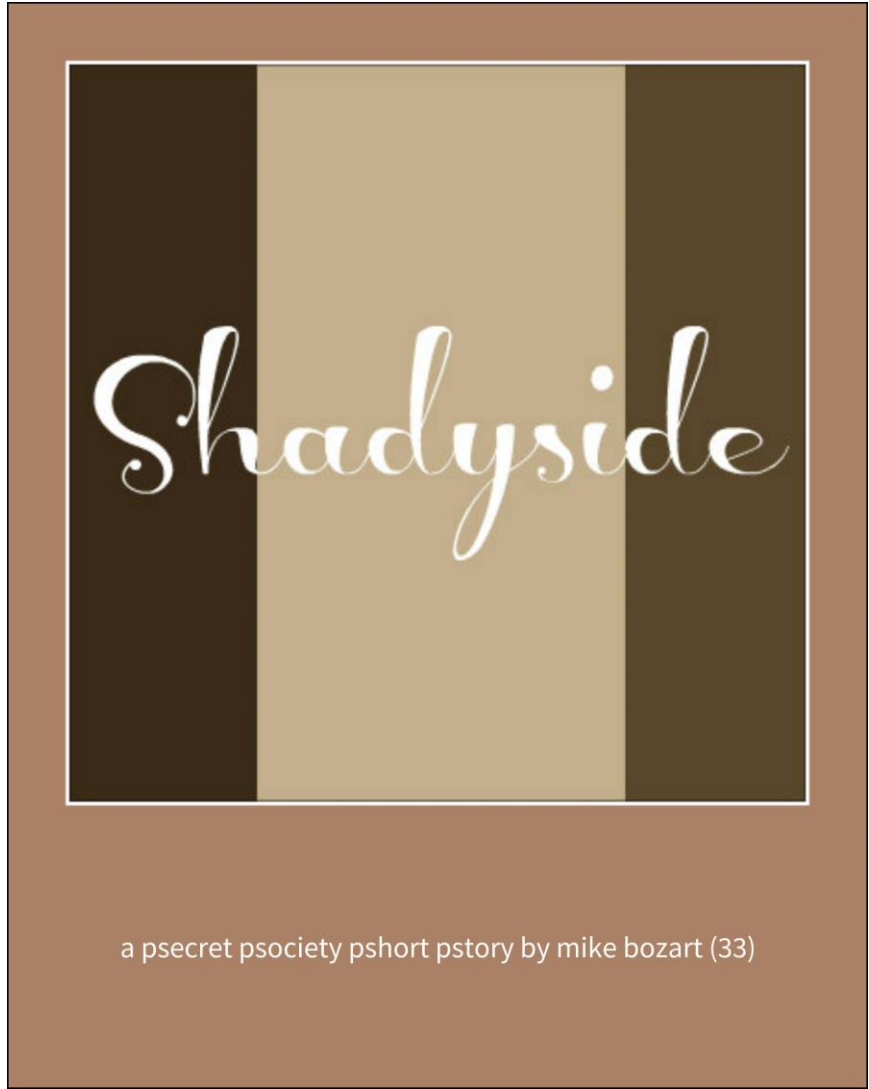
a dectet of short stories from Pittsburgh and vicinity

by Mike Bozart

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Shadyside by **Mike Bozart** (Agent 33) | January 2021

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“I even went to some of the early-round matches involving the minnows,” the caffeine-alert, mid-20-something, slightly-shorter-than-the-current-Caucasian-American-standing-average, dark-haired, bearded worker stated as he spread the vegetable cream cheese on the longitudinally sliced plain bagel. He seemed to be pondering something. *Wonder where in the hell this 50-something, red-haired guy is from. Why would a tourist come to Pittsburgh in the winter, and especially right now, when the Covid-19 numbers are spiking again? Bet he got a cheap-ass flight back in June.*

“Where were these soccer matches played?” I inquired as I looked to my left at the vacant corner of Oliver Avenue and Grant Street on an ash-gray, damp-cold, low-cloud-capped, sporadic-patches-of-recent-snow-on-the-morning-sidewalks Sunday (December 20, 2020).

“These virtual matches were *played* in neighborhood pubs. Afterwards, a few pints were intended to be consumed. However, Covid killed that.” *Inside a pub? Was it some miniaturized futbol game? A foosball tourney?*

I offered up a puzzled expression.

“Each of the 68 teams were from neighborhoods in the Steel City,” he informed unfazed with civic pride. “Some of the really small ones were combined. For example, there is no Hayes – Homestead neighborhood; those are two separate neighborhoods in the southeast area. Pittsburgh actually has between 89 and 93 neighborhoods, depending on whom you ask, or what website you go to.” *Very interesting. Will definitely have to write this up when I get back home.*

“I see. Did these virtual matches take two hours like real soccer matches?” *He is so clueless.*

“Oh, no,” he replied. “The whole game session could be wrapped-up in under ten minutes. The matches themselves were very short – just two to three minutes – with seven or eight minutes of recording and result-uploading.”

“Oh, ok. So, how does it work?” I was hooked.

“First, seven numbers are picked by an online random number generator, an RNG, between 1 and 90, inclusive.”

“Ninety? Why not 100?” *And why seven numbers?*

“Ninety for the 90 minutes in a regulation match, me thinks,” he said while scratching the right side of his schnoz.

“I got ya. Oh, make my three bagels rosemary – olive oil.”
And Popeye?

“Are you sure? The everything bagels are the same price.”

“Yeah, final answer,” I announced. “Those little, black, round poppy seeds get stuck between my teeth, and then I look like a meth-head.”

There was a slight chuckle from the bagelmeister.

“So, we have these seven randomly selected numbers, then what?” *Will this guy steal our game and then run a league in his hometown? Guess it’s public domain.*

“They are checked against a team’s slate of numbers,” he informed. “If they are a home team, they have between 17 and 30 numbers, depending on the round; away teams have between 13 and 21 numbers. Each matching number is worth a single goal, but some – not all – prime numbers are worth two goals. It’s a single-elimination tournament – kinda like [NCAA] March Madness [the popular men’s college basketball tournament] – with seeding.”

“How is/was the seeding determined?” I was intrigued.

“Well, since last fall was the first-ever tournament, we all agreed – well, let me take that back now – most of us agreed, that is, to use the average position of six ‘best Pittsburgh neighborhoods’ polls. Some not-so-popular neighborhoods strongly objected, at least initially, but eventually all signed on after getting food/drink discounts from taverns in the top-ranked ‘hoods. You know how it is, everyone has their price in the end.”

“For sure,” I concurred. “So, it was a lose-one-and-you’re-done tournament with 68 teams. I guess there was a play-in mini-round, and then a 64 – 32 – 16 – 8 – 4 – 2 – 1 reduction. Was that how the bracketing worked?”

“Not quite; it was somewhat unique. There were seven matches in each of the first six rounds, with the seven winners then becoming the away teams to the next-seven-best seeds. Rounds 7 through 9 had six matches. Round 10 – the Elite Eight – had only four. Round 11 was the

semifinals. And Round 12 was the championship final, which was held just last week.”

“Oh, wow. Which neighborhood team won?”

“Shadyside!” he exclaimed with verve as he showed me some boxed line scores on his large Samsung smartphone. *I’ve heard of that one. But, where exactly is it? Hmmm ...*

“Where is Shadyside?” I then asked.

“It’s in the East End, only a few miles northeast of here; it’s where I live. Some days – when it’s warmer – I ride my bike to work. It’s a pretty decent neighborhood. It’s in the top 5 in most every poll.” *Must have been a single-digit seed.*

“And, what did you guys win?” *A gold coin? Now, why’d I think of that?*

“Oh, nothing much really – mainly bragging rights. We did get a nice flag and a cool banner.”

“I see,” I affirmed.

“Not sure where we plan to put them, maybe somewhere inside the tavern. So, where are you from?”

“North Carolina – Charlotte,” I replied.

“Oh, Carolina. Got a shitload of buddies scattered down there. I go to Myrtle Beach at least twice a summer. I love that place.” *Really?*

“How long is the flight from PIT to MYR?” *Bet it’s about two hours.*

“Oh, no; I never fly – I just drive it.” *Sheez! I would never drive that far anymore.*

“Wow! How much mileage is that?” [693 miles; 1115 km]

“A lot. But, I really don’t mind it. Did you drive here from Charlotte?”

“No, we flew in. I can’t do long-distance car travel anymore.” *Wonder why. Bad back?*

“I can’t quite make the whole stretch in one day. So, I stop in Benson [NC] at a Days Inn just off I-95, which leaves a relatively short drive the next day.”

"I see. Are the Steelers home today?"

"No, they play in Cincinnati tomorrow night. If they were playing at Heinz Field later today, this place would be packed right now – or at least if it were pre-Covid-19. You see, the Steelers stay in the [William Penn] hotel that engulfs this bagel shop."

"Oh, ok. Think they'll make a Super Bowl run?"

"Sincerely doubt it," he opined. "I don't believe that they're as good as their 11-2 record. They've lost their last two, and I think they may lose more. Ben [Roethlisberger] got old. Fast. And the defense is spotty. What about your [4-9] Panthers?"
My Panthers?

"No comment." I chuckled.

"Ok, that will be \$7.89. Cash or card?"

"Debit card."

I paid, grabbed the brown paper bag, thanked him for the chat, said goodbye, and slid out as a young couple moseyed on in to the all-tables-cordoned-off, take-out-only, national-chain restaurant. I began walking back to our temporary one-room abode. There were still not that many people outside. Eight minutes later, I was back in our 3rd-floor flat at the more-than-a-century-old-though-nicely-refurbished, tongue-in-cheek-artsy, major-discount-package-priced, four-star inn.

"Did you have to wait for it to open?" Carmel-to-maroon-streaked-black-haired Monique asked from the small desk on the window-side of the room.

"No, hon," I answered next to the bedside, kitschy, birdcaged chandelier. "And, I got just what you wanted: a plain bagel with veggie cream cheese." *Yes! / Hmm ... They should have placed a stuffed bird in there. A parrot, perhaps. Maybe they did. And some guest took it.*

"Yey-hey! I am so hungry. How many people were in there? Was it crowded? You were gone a while." *Was I? Talked too much, I guess.*

"It was just me and the sole employee, Agent 32." *Agent 32? Hmm ... I bet he is recording right now. The sneaky kano. [Filipino slang for American]*

“A woman or a man?” Monique demanded to know.

“A guy in his 20s,” I replied. “We got into a bit of a conversation.” *A bit?*

“About what?” *She’s like a prosecutor today.*

“Well, he’s a big fan of Myrtle Beach. He drives there every summer.” *What?! Why in the world were they talking about a beach in South Carolina?*

“Drives? From here? No way!”

“Yeah, I know, hon. That’s quite a long haul. Well, he also mentioned some bizarre, computer-based, virtual soccer league, consisting of teams from the Pittsburgh neighborhoods. It sounded kind of interesting.” *Only hubby would find such interesting.*

“A virtual soccer league? Yeah, that’s right up your alley, Dodoy.” [one of Monique’s many nicknames for me]

“Yeah, it really is, 32. He showed me some of the results of the virtual matches. I was genuinely intrigued.”

“I’m sure you were. I’m sure you were.” *Echo mode?*

“Repetition will get you knowhere [sic] in half the allotted time, Monique.”

“Knowhere with a silent k?”

“Yeppers.”

Monique then started to devour her torus. I chewed at my still-mildly-warm, soft-but-dense, delicious bagel while looking out the window. My mind began to meander. *Did I just see some snowflakes? Don’t think snow is predicted today. Maybe just some straggler-crystals. Would love to check out the Shadyside neighborhood. Not sure if Monique will want to go. She seems content in this warm hotel room with her smartphone. She sure loves that Visayan bayot [gay] comedian.*

“Hon, want to hop on a city bus and check out the eastside of town?” I enquired.

“Nah, you go ahead. It’s a little too chilly-willy for me. Just bring me back a pineapple drink. Is there a Trader Joe’s

where you are going? I like theirs best; it's from the 'pinas."
[Philippines]

"Yes, in fact, there is, 32." *Hubby is definitely recording. It's obvious now. Wonder if he will let me review the final draft before he publishes it online, and shares it on Facebook. He has been bypassing me as of late.*

"Yey!" she exclaimed.

"I should be back in two hours. Lock the dead-bolt. If anyone knocks, look out the peephole before opening."

"Yes, yes; I know, darling."

"Just a friendly reminder from Mr. Health & Safety."

"Ok, 33. Be safe, too. Don't talk to anyone." *Yep, she knows that this will be part of a future short story.*

"But, I won't have much of a story then, 32," I protested. *Why does he feel compelled to talk to complete strangers? We don't know a soul in this city.*

"Ok, just get going." *What a send-off. Guess the honeymoon is over.*

I caught the P1 bus on Grant Street at Steel Plaza. The sparsely occupied bus was soon whizzing along on an auto-traffic-restricted two-lane road: the MLK East Busway. I pulled the stop-request cable and got off at the below-Negley Avenue platform.

After walking south for three long blocks, I arrived at Walnut Street. I turned right. At first, nothing special, but after the fourth block, a sub-district of boutique shops and trendy restaurants arose. *Looks like a nice, up-and-coming, re-imagined old neighborhood. Wonder if the bagel dude lives around here.*

Once across quietly deserted Filbert Street, a two-second mutual glance with a young Asian lady, who appeared to be drinking coffee, or perhaps hot green tea, alone beside a picture window in an above-retail apartment. My mind raced back to 1978. *Wonder what Monica [a grade-lower-at-a-small-single-cloister-parochial-school-in-east-Charlotte, of-Chinese-ancestry student] is thinking right now – at this exact moment. 'Need to buy that nice sweater at Nordstrom before someone else does'? Or, back then on that backyard*

slope, now a few degrees less steep from four decades of so-slow-as-to-be-imperceptible-at-a-quick-glance, invisibly incremental, between-the-grass-roots erosion. 'Oh, Mike, you will forever be a strange one.' [internal chuckle] Such an odd life. Is there a clearinghouse of thoughts? Some-meta-where?

My reverie was broken by a car horn. Someone was slow to accelerate from a green light. *Maybe an all-nighter? Or, are they smack-whacked, [high on heroin] and passed-out?*

I then turned right onto Bellefonte Street. Soon I was passing the brick-and-mortar-walled William Penn Tavern. *Is this the official PNSL [Pittsburgh Neighborhood Soccer League] pub for Shadyside. Well, can't ask; it's closed and vacated.*

I eventually turned right onto Elmer Street. I walked with my toboggan-capped head down: a burst of graupel. Still alone on the residential lane, I crossed College Street, and then was on Spahr Street, heading northeast. Then, a right on Ellsworth Avenue. Finally, a cut-through of the Giant Eagle – Family Dollar parking lot, and I was on Penn Avenue. I saw the Trader Joe's sign on the left. Soon I was in a long queue (store occupancy restricted due to Covid-19). *Jeez! This line is worse than the usual line at the Metropolitan – Midtown store. [Charlotte]*

I exited the store, descended some nearby steps, and soon boarded the P1 at the East Liberty stop. Once again, there was hardly anyone on the bus. *One benefit of this pandemic: uncrowded buses and trains.*

Upon opening the hotel room: "What took you so long?"

Round 1		T1	1	4	8	36	46	56	63	
Seed	Friday – Sunday	2020		September 25 – 27						Seed
55	Glen Hazelwood	6 – 2	Larimer	68						
56	Crawford – Roberts	1 – 0	California – Kirkbride	67						
57	Fine View	2 – 1	Northview Heights	66						
58	Terrace Village	2 – 1	Lincoln – Lem. – Belmar	65						
59	Hays – Homestead	4 – 1	Homewood So. & West	64						
60	Homewood North	1 – 2	East Hills	63						
61	Beltzhoover	1 – 0	Arlington – SC – Mt. Olvr.	62						
Extra Time	Total Goals:		24	(3.43 per match)						Upset Winner

Round 2		T1	3	10	37	47	63	68	78	
Seed	Friday – Sunday	2020		October 2 – 4						Seed
48	Allentown	3 – 0	East Hills	63						
49	Perry South	1 – 0	Beltzhoover	61						
50	Sheraden – Esplen	2 – 1	Hays – Homestead	59						
51	Marshall – Shadeland	4 – 1	Terrace Village	58						
52	Hill – Bedford	2 – 1	Fine View	57						
53	Spring – City View	1 – 2	Crawford – Roberts	56						
54	West Oakland	1 – 0	Glen Hazelwood	55						
Extra Time	Total Goals:		19	(2.71 per match)						Upset Winner

Round 3		T1	8	11	14	21	38	75	77	
Seed	Friday – Sunday	2020		October 9 – 11						Seed
41	East Liberty	3 – 2	Crawford – Roberts	56						
42	Manchester – Chateau	2 – 1	West Oakland	54						
43	Perry North	5 – 2	Hill – Bedford	52						
44	Carrick	3 – 2	Marshall – Shadeland	51						
45	Garfield	4 – 2	Sheraden – Esplen	50						
46	Knoxville – Bon Air	3 – 1	Perry South	49						
47	Troy Hill – Herra Island	1 – 0	Allentown	48						
Extra Time	Total Goals:		31	(4.43 per match)						Upset Winner

Round 4		T1	30	36	54	60	63	64	87	
Seed	Friday – Sunday	2020		October 16 – 18						Seed
34	Oakwood – E. Carnegie	3 – 2	Troy Hill – Herra Island	47						
35	Bluff – Uptown	0 – 1	Knoxville – Bon Air	46						
36	Allegheny	1 – 2	Garfield	45						
37	Windgap – Chartiers	0 – 1	Carrick	44						
38	Elliott – West End – RM	1 – 0	Perry North	43						
39	South Oakland	2 – 3	Manchester – Chateau	42						
40	Upper Hill	0 – 1	East Liberty	41						
Extra Time	Total Goals:		17	(2.43 per match)						Upset Winner

Round 5		T1	4	5	12	15	30	44	63
Seed	Friday – Sunday	2020	October 23 – 25		Seed				
27	Beechview	2 – 1	Knoxville – Bon Air		46				
28	Crafton Heights	1 – 0	Garfield		45				
29	Central Northside	4 – 2	Carrick		44				
30	Lincoln Place	2 – 1	Manchester – Chateau		42				
31	Overbrook	2 – 1	East Liberty		41				
32	Central Oakland	1 – 2	Elliott – West End – RM		38				
33	Strip – Polish Hill	1 – 2	Oakwood – E. Carnegie		34				
Extra Time	Total Goals:	22	(3.14 per match)		Upset Winner				

Round 6		T1	3	18	33	52	60	70	90
Seed	Friday – Sunday	2020	October 30 – November 1		Seed				
20	Mount Washington	2 – 0	Elliott – West End – RM		38				
21	Brookline	0 – 2	Oakwood – E. Carnegie		34				
22	Fairywood	2 – 0	Overbrook		31				
23	Southside Slopes	3 – 2	Lincoln Place		30				
24	Upper Lawrenceville	0 – 1	Central Northside		29				
25	Lower Lawrenceville	6 – 3	Crafton Heights		28				
26	Brighton Heights	0 – 1	Beechview		27				
Extra Time	Total Goals:	22	(3.14 per match)		Upset Winner				

Round 7		T1	8	12	27	30	31	76	89
Seed	Saturday & Sunday	2020	November 7 & 8		Seed				
15	Bloomfield	2 – 1	Oakwood – E. Carnegie		34				
16	Golden Triangle	2 – 0	Central Northside		29				
17	Central Lawrenceville	3 – 2	Beechview		27				
18	Summer Hill	3 – 2	Lower Lawrenceville		25				
19	North Oakland	2 – 1	Southside Slopes		23				
20	Mount Washington	2 – 0	Fairywood		22				
Extra Time	Total Goals:	20	(3.33 per match)		Upset Winner				

Round 8		T1	7	10	15	24	40	50	73
Seed	Saturday & Sunday	2020	November 14 & 15		Seed				
9	Regent Sq – Swisshelm	4 – 2	Mount Washington		20				
10	Friendship	3 – 0	North Oakland		19				
11	Stanton Heights	3 – 0	Summer Hill		18				
12	Southside Flats & Shore	2 – 1	Central Lawrenceville		17				
13	Banksville	4 – 0	Golden Triangle		16				
14	Duquesne Heights	3 – 1	Bloomfield		15				
Extra Time	Total Goals:	23	(3.83 per match)		Upset Winner				

Round 9		T1	12	20	22	26	30	35	36
Seed	Saturday & Sunday	2020	November 21 & 22				Seed		
3	Shadyside	3 – 0	Duquesne Heights				14		
4	Highland Park	2 – 1	Banksville				13		
5	Squirrel Hill South	2 – 1	Southside Flats & Shore				12		
6	Greenfield	2 – 1	Stanton Heights				11		
7	Westwood	3 – 1	Friendship				10		
8	Morningside	0 – 1	Regent Sq – Swisshelm				9		
Extra Time	Total Goals:		17	(2.83 per match)				Upset Winner	

Quarterfinals / Elite Eight

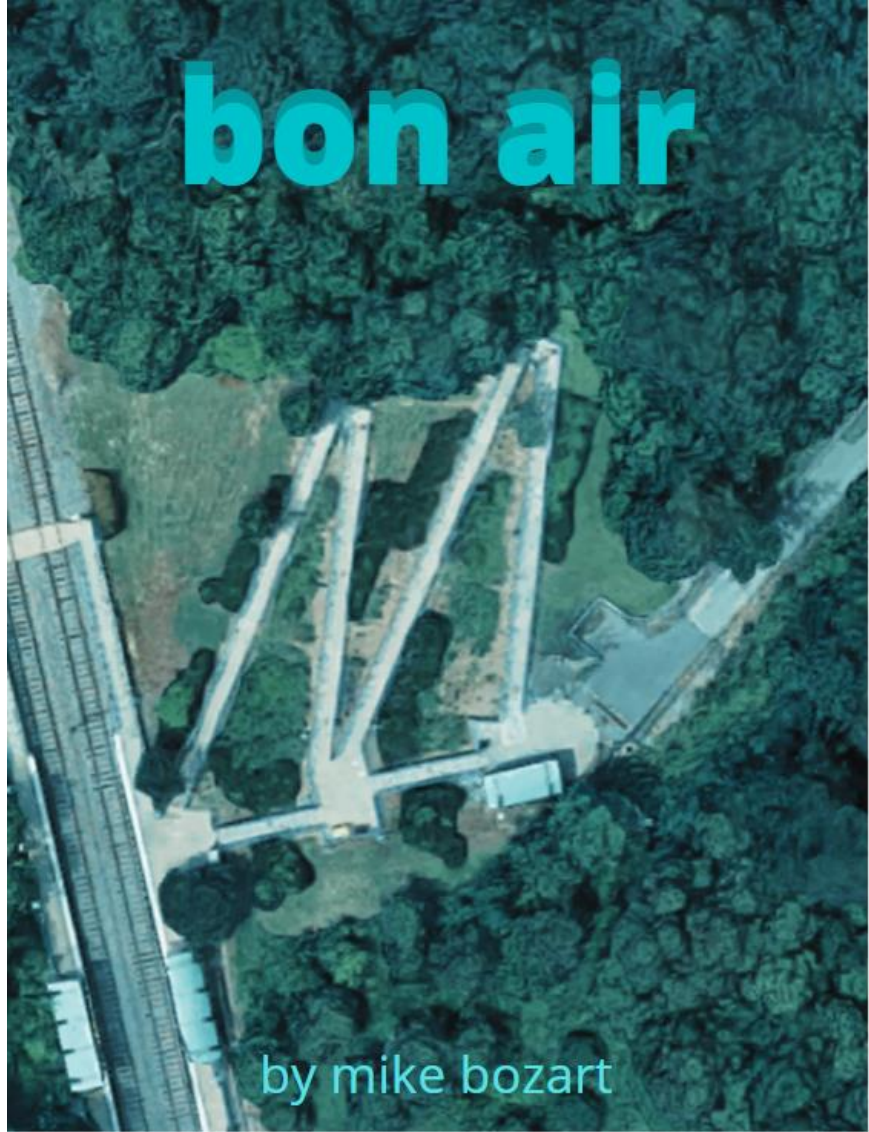
Round 10		T1	2	14	30	60	76	81	87
Seed	Saturday & Sunday	2020	November 28 & 29				Seed		
1	Squirrel Hill North	1 – 2	Regent Sq – Swisshelm				9		
2	Point Breeze	4 – 3	Westwood				7		
3	Shadyside	2 – 1	Greenfield				6		
4	Highland Park	1 – 3	Squirrel Hill South				5		
Extra Time	Total Goals:		17	(4.25 per match)				Upset Winner	

Semifinals / Final Four

Round 11		T1	17	19	25	47	49	72	89
Seed	Sunday	2020	December 6				Seed		
2	Point Breeze	0 – 2	Regent Sq – Swisshelm				9		
3	Shadyside	3 – 1	Squirrel Hill South				5		
Extra Time	Total Goals:		6	(3.00 per match)				Upset Winner	

Final / Championship Match

Round 12		T1	9	14	16	37	40	59	88
Seed	Sunday	2020	December 13				Seed		
3	Shadyside	3 – 1	Regent Sq – Swisshelm				9		
Extra Time	Total Tourney Goals:		222	(3.31 per match)				Upset Winner	
Champions	Total Matches:		67	Total Upsets:				16	



BON AIR by **Mike Bozart** (Agent 33) | July 2021

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Forty-and-a-shade-or-two-more, maritime Southeast Asian Monique intently studies a colorful, previously unretouched, glossy, tri-fold brochure that she snagged the day before from an information kiosk at PIT (Pittsburgh International Airport). She is seated in front of me (nebulous Agent 33) on the right side of an almost-vacant-due-to-the-Covid-19-pandemic T light-rail car. As the northbound Blue Line train slows for the next station – Denise – on a chilly-but-calm, overcast, mid-to-late December afternoon (2020), she suddenly twists her Filipina head around.

“Why does Pittsburgh end with an *h*, but all of the other burghs in the [United] States end with a *g*? What’s the deal with that, bana?” [husband in Cebuano] *Bergelsburgher. [sic] Whence that boroughsome [sic] neologism cometh a-burrowing? Why does my crenulated clump oft repeat it? [internal chuckle]*

“Actually, Agent 32, [Monique’s psecret psociety agent no.] the Steel City had no letter *h* from 1891 through 1911; Pittsburgh [pronounced with an aridly affected stress on the *gh*] went two decades without that distinctive, semi-muted ‘huh’ on the end.” *Agent 32? Semi-muted ‘huh’? Bet he’s recording again. He’s so desperate for short-story material these days. My dodoy [Monique’s Visayan-based, self-concocted nickname for me] will toss a pebble into any pond just to see the ripples diffract around a turtle’s head.*

“You’re being overdramatic for your hidden microphone. Nobody says ‘Pittsburgh’ like that, 33. No one. What an outrageous mispronunciation.” She whips her head back around. *Wonder if he took any mind-melding substances in that mall food-court restroom? [at South Hills Village] Such a sneaky kano. [very common Filipino slang for American] / Wonder if that cute, thirty-ish Latina maid [who we saw earlier in the hotel elevator] is cleaning our room right now. At this very moment. Has she noticed the \$12 tip on the table? Sure hope so. Such hard, back-breaking toil. [Monique was a hotel housekeeper for a spell at the Ritz-Carlton in uptown Charlotte.] Though, we left the room in pretty good shape. She won’t have much tidying to do. Just a change of sheets. Maybe replace a couple of towels. An easy room to dispatch from her to-do list. Hmmm ... What will she think of my non-business card? Will she play along? Nah. Probably already trashed it. No time for such nonpaying Anglo-centric frivolity. Three more rooms – or is it four? – to clean by 2:55. [PM] It’s going to be close. Down to the bare-copper lamp wire. [observed in a motel room in*

Carolina Beach in 2016] Will she make it? 'Hustle! Hustle it!' Bet the supervisor's voice grates her nerves. Probably wishing she called in sick. Again. Got off neural track. 6a. The fey way. Always anticipating the improbable: the low-rent, highly spent story of my shunt-extended life. Proved to be a losing stratagem. Hmmm ... These culture wars. Quite amusing. And so tragic at the same time. What a 'lovely' overrated species. Babbling baboons bipedaling towards the precipice. 'I must be the first billionaire ego in outer space!' Vain priorities. Bet this 'great' ape race is smoldering burnt toast by 2121. Or maybe 2071. [internal groan] Wonder what Agent 66 is doing right now in Morganton. [NC] Screenprinting cosmic clues? Onto old shoes? In faded hues? Why couldn't it have worked out? Stuck in Charlotte: a bastion of bore-ons. [sic] Bleh. What a feckless fate.

Two Caucasian passengers, a presumed mother and daughter board the articulated Siemens SD-400. A few seconds later the train is moving again. The twin-rail-guided coach smoothly passes over a closed-off, disused-and-devoid-of-autos, apparently-no-longer-necessary, bordering-on-petite parking pot. A rather steep, densely wooded hillside on the right arrests my attention: an assortment of leafless, gray-barked deciduous trees on a white carpet of fallen-three-days-ago snow. My mind meanders with the passing, dormant, sylvan scene. *An exemplarily perfect early winter day in eastern North America. When did I last think that? Or, have I pondered such before? Memory not so sharp anymore. This part of Pittsburgh is very much Appalachia. Could pass for anywhere on the ancient spine between southern Maine and northern Georgia, give or take a few tree species. Almost like the suburbs of Asheville. [NC] Or that sinuous freight railroad between Old Fort and Black Mountain. [NC] Wonder what kind of mischief has taken place in those woods during the warmer months. Was a valuable object ever lost over there? A ring? A necklace? An auspice. Or a ...*

"Bon Air Station," the monotone announcement states as the train decelerates. "Exit to the right. Please watch your step."

As the train approaches the platform, Monique and I notice a middle-aged, average-build, black-beanie-capped man running up the angled concrete ramp from the station towards the isolated, eponymous, single-family-home neighborhood high above. *Wonder why he's in such a rush on a lazy, languid, lead-headed Sunday afternoon. Mantality [sic] sports? Ha! What is it with that non-word? Need to give*

it a rest. Is he cold? His coat looks wholly adequate, and adequately hole-free. Has something adverse happened back at his domicile? An emergency of some sort? Has the teenage son passed-out from an inadvertent – or advertent – fentanyl overdose? Or, has the pre-teen daughter locked herself in her bedroom and won't respond? Sheez! What grim thoughts. Or, is he just getting in a good calorie-burn? Need to start riding the [single-speed] bike again. The beltline circumference is going in the wrong direction; becoming the bulgeline. [sic] Pants getting tight. Not good. / Wonder if hubby is wondering why that man is running. Bet his wife told him to 'get your ass back home now!' Probably something like that. Was probably watching [NFL] football and drinking beer. Too much beer, I bet. Getting silly. Too silly. Got drunk. 'I'll quickly sober up by running up this hill.' Crazy male mentality. Hmmm ... Or, is he fleeing a crime scene? Did he rob someone? Where is the victim? A woman? How bad is she hurt? Need to cut down on the real-crime TV. So addictive, though. Those horrible events really happened. Not made-up stories. 100% true. Not partially fictitious, like hubby's. Whew! America has more sadists and murders than I ever imagined. Hope we get back to the hotel before dark. Don't want to be traipsing around an unfamiliar American city at dusk. Scary. Just never know what might happen. Most likely not good. Time to check Facebook. That bayot [gay in Cebuano] comedian will ease my mind. He's so darn funny! Hee-hee.

The train rolls out of the unpretentious station as the running man disappears up a narrow, vehicle-traffic-long-ago-barred, old-asphalt-lane, pipe-handrailed Clanton Street. The slender coach double-lurches, but is soon smoothly slope-sailing, paralleling sparsely trafficked Saw Mill Run Boulevard. As Boggs Station nears, everyone aboard is drowsily silent. The train is tight-lipped, too.

My mind meanders yet again on the descent to the Monongahela River. *That last Bruegger's rosemary – olive oil bagel sure will be nice later. That's really all I need for the remainder of the day. Enough carbs to barble [sic] a balrus. [sic] What ridiculous nonsense I thinketh of late. Wow! Now, we're in a tunnel. Wonder what Monique wants for dinner. Probably Chinese takeout. Was that joint on Smithfield Street? Could walk there. / Getting hungry again. Will need some rice soon. Wonder what hubby is thinking about. Probably wants more dark beer. Yuck! Wish he would stop. His gut can't take alcohol anymore. IBS. Bleeding ulcers. Tomorrow will be ruined. Or, is he still thinking about that*

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