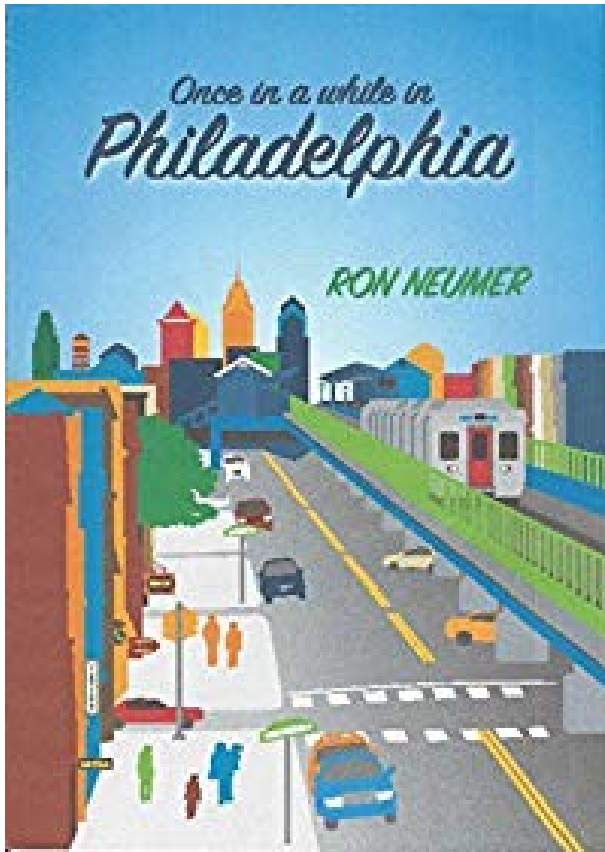


Once in a while in Philadelphia



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I would think you would have to wonder about the guy pictured on the back of the book almost formally dressed in his tuxedo, formal shirt collar open, satin bow tie hanging askew, orange baseball cap above his sunglasses, standing on a bench at the Margaret and Orthodox Street El Station...and what's that - he's not even wearing his shoes. It's like...what kind of guy is this anyhow? What is he about? And how does a person almost formally attired without any shoes on wind up standing on a bench at an elevated train stop in the Frankford section of Philadelphia? Ron Neumer shrugs the question off. "I'm just trying to catch up with some friends and see what's going on with them.

I heard Rico and Arlene might be getting married and I wanted to be properly dressed for the ceremony. That's all there is to it. Nothing more." Rico James Paradise and Arlene Marie Denali have had this in-and-out of each other's life revolving door thing going on for twelve years. On their first date when they were both seventeen at the El Rancho Western Style Restaurant, Arlene asked Rico between sips on her milkshake, "What do you want to do with your life?" She just wanted to find some things out about the guy seated in the same booth with her. Arlene heard this somewhere and she believed it. Everybody should set some kind of goals for themselves to give them some kind of direction so you can say, at some point in your life, I am proud of myself. I really am. She had goals set out for her life; she wanted to see if he did. This is the way Rico responded to Arlene's question.

“That’s a stupid damn question to ask me. That question makes no sense at all. What are you trying to get at? I’ll be something or another.” This conversation set the tone for their relationship. Twelve years later deciding she needed a change in her life and she couldn’t go on the same way, at one-thirty in the morning after dancing cheek-to-cheek with Rico to a love song played on a dated juke box in a closed private club on Melrose Street, Arlene asked him: “Would you marry me? You can’t live without love in your life. Marry someone who loves you.” She thought to herself, “Please don’t say no.” In Ron Neumer’s book *Once in a while in Philadelphia* you will find out about people caught up in the complexities of everyday life in a row house neighborhood bordered by an elevated north-to-south interstate highway and a high speed railroad corridor. Also, with a salty flavor to his words, Ron Neumer’s book will tell you about some colorful people with low expectations for their future and some of the off the wall things they did.

Take Bill “Tiger” Stukowski for example. He tried to catch the Jersey Devil, he wanted to invade Cuba, and he tried to catch a falling air-conditioner from a second story window. Ron Neumer sums things up this way. “You can’t make some of these things up. Some neighborhoods give you the stories. This is one of those neighborhoods. You just have to observe things and take it in.”