***2013 Reunion Plans***

***Thread of Reunion Plans posted by Subject & Date***

**

*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**

***2013 Reunion Planning Committee***

*Events Coordinator: Eddy Pay (* [*brentkids@sesi.com*](mailto:brentkids@sesi.com) *)*

*Travel & Accommodation: (see* ***Options*** *below)*

*Information Distribution: Roy McDonald (* [*brentkids@sesi.com*](mailto:brentkids@sesi.com) *)*

*Treasurer: Dave Martin (* [*brentkids@sesi.com*](mailto:brentkids@sesi.com) *)*

*Promotional/Memorabilia: Marcia Mau (*[*brentkids@sesi.com*](mailto:brentkids@sesi.com) *)*

*Confirmation Coordinator: Ann Neal (*[*brentkids@sesi.com*](mailto:brentkids@sesi.com) *)*

*Reunion Host: Jane Ashcraft Shapiro (*[*brentkids@sesi.com*](mailto:brentkids@sesi.com)*)*

*Complaint Department: Your e-mail address.com*

*Website:* [*www.brentkids.com*](http://www.brentkids.com)

*Correspondence related to Reunion:* [*brentkids@sesi.com*](mailto:brentkids@sesi.com)

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

***Subject: Hotel Room Block Expansion***

***Posted Date: 05/08/2013***

*Dear Brentonians:*

*As of this posting, the 20 guaranteed Rooms (60 nights) at the Avenue Crowne Plaza Hotel (877-283-5110) have been met. Thank you for booking/reserving early. With the ASManila (120 Rooms) and other conventions in Chicago, the only available expansion of our room guarantees are Hotel Suites (1 King, 1 Sofa Bed in separate adjoining area). We have added 5 more rooms (Suites) to our guarantee in anticipation that some of you are waiting to commit based on your schedules/events that are unknown at this time. The discounted rates for the Suites are $199.00/night plus tax (16.4%), double occupancy. That is still a savings of $100.00+ stated on their website pricing. The Hotel is simply running out of rooms.*

*Please make your reservations for the remaining availability of Suites as soon as possible and let us know that you have made them along with your itinerary. We cannot guarantee that there will be any additional rooms at the Hotel beyond our commitment. If there are overflow rooms available, they will be at the market rate of the Hotel.*

*Your Reunion Committee*

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\****

***Subject: Hotel Room Block***

***Posted Date: 04/24/2013***

*Dear Brentonians,*

*Following updates for the 2013 Reunion in Chicago is important for you to consider in your planning:*

* ***Hotel Reservations*** *– We currently have a block of 20 rooms guaranteed with the Avenue Crowne Plaza Hotel for the Reunion dates September 27 – 29 (3 nights) at the rates of $159.00 & $179.00 per night (1 King, 2 Queens respectively). And currently we have 9 confirmed number of reserved rooms made by you. So we are close to half-way there based on our estimated guaranteed rooms for the Reunion. Once the 20 rooms are reserved, the rates return to normal rates for that Hotel (approximately $100.00 more per night). In order for us to expand the number of rooms from 20 to some higher number at the negotiated lower rates, we have to do so before we reach that estimated number of 20 by the terms of our contract with the Hotel. As of this posting, we have 30 Alumni indicating that they will attend (including spouse/SO) resulting in 19 corresponding rooms (See Attendee List on website). However, only 10 rooms have confirmed reservations. We ask that you reserve your rooms as soon as possible so that we can have an opportunity to add to the room estimates in time. By providing your Credit Card to reserve a room, the Hotel guarantees a “hold” on your card and does not charge your card until your arrival/departure. Should your plans change, you can cancel that held reservation up to 24 hours prior to your arrival date. So, please call and reserve early (1-877-283-5110) and also let us know so we can expand the number of rooms with some accuracy. There are two additional reasons for you to reserve your room as soon as possible. There is a large Convention planned in Chicago for the same time-frame as our Reunion and ASManila is expecting 100 to 125 to attend their reunion. The Hotel may not be able to expand our estimated rooms if you wait too long to confirm.*
* ***Hotel Nights*** – *Several of you have elected to extend your stay before/beyond the Reunion dates and explore beautiful Chicago. The Hotel operates on number of nights basis. Our Reunion is for 3 nights at the negotiated rates. We have been able to negotiate the extended number of nights with the Hotel, at the lower rates, on a case by case basis. If you plan more than three nights stay, go ahead and make the reservations for the three nights minimum and notify us of your desire to stay extended nights. We will try and negotiate that extension with the Hotel but cannot guarantee success.*
* ***Registration Fee –*** *Again, the earlier the better. After August 15th (postmark), the rate goes to $125.00/pp*
* ***Forum –*** On the website (<http://www.brentkids.com>) Reunion Forum link there are six topics that we’ve identified for on line discussion: Airlines, Ground Transportation, Food Specialties and Restaurants, Entertainment, Tours, and Miscellaneous (Freebies, Auctions, etc.). Feel free to share information with other attendees.

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\****

***Subject: Your Assistance Details***

***Posted Date: 04/19/2013***

Dear Brentonians:

The Reunion 2013 in Chicago is gaining a full head of steam. You can look at the latest changes on the website, *Chicago Bound Details* and the *Attendee List* on who is coming and, sadly, who is not as we update them almost daily.

We need your help in the following areas:

* Make your airline reservations early and provide us your detailed itinerary (Flight carrier, Flight #, arrival date & time and the airport). Prices will only go up the longer you wait.
* Make your Hotel reservations early. After September 5th, the prices will return to normal rates. Let us know if you selected a King or Queen, sharing or wanting to share, arrival date, number of nights reserved.
* Send your Registration Fees early. After August 15th (postmark) they will rise as stated.
* Take a peek at the “Attendee List” to see the type of data we are trying to capture and provide to all of you. Provide us with that data as soon as you finalized your plans or in increments if you wish.
* Provide us the name of your spouse or significant other attending so that we can make accurate ID Badges necessary for all activities.
* If planning or not sure on attending, let us know. We will appeal to your nostalgic bone and see if we can help.
* Bring your dancing shoes. The combined group of ASM and Brent Alumni will be rockin from 8:00 PM – 2:00 AM on Saturday night. Attire for that evening will be semi-formal (jacket, dress, Barong, or business suit).

Send all correspondence (e-mail) to [brentkids@sesi.com](mailto:brentkids@sesi.com) and visit the website <http://www.brentkids.com> often for posted updates.

Later on we will be sharing attendee lists with ASM for names that you may know from Manila.

Sincerely,

Your Reunion Committee

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\****

***Subject: Reunion Details***

***Posted Date: 04/03/2013***

*Reunion registration is on its way. This document is now history. Consult the various links such as “Chicago Bound Details”, “Attendee List”, “Crowne Plaza Hotel”, etc. for up-to-date information. Make your reservations early and please let us know via* [*brentkids@sesi.com*](mailto:brentkids@sesi.com) *the following information that we can publish as well as assist us in the planning process:*

* *Hotel Reservations Made (King or dual Queen rooms)*
* *Number in your party*
* *Airline/transportation Itinerary*
* *Registration Fee paid (Address in “Chicago Bound Details”*
* *Length of Stay (nights) - dates*

*Looking forward to a great time!*

*Reunion Committee*

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\****

***Subject: Reunion Site Selection***

***Posted Date: 03/24/2013***

*Thank you all for participating in the Reunion 2013 site selection process. We took all your suggestion under “New Locations” of the Forum and using the criteria posted under “Category Mapping” (Alumni on the ground, Cost comparisons, Central Air Hub, Accommodations, and Entertainment) and came up with the following results:*

*Chicago*

*So, some may be disappointed, some may be elated, but* ***Chicago*** *is going to be the site for our last hurrah! As an aggregate, it met most of the Criteria elements. Our individual preferences were set aside. In the following weeks we will be working with Jane Ashcraft Shapiro ‘65, Alumna on the ground and Host of the 2013 Reunion. We will be finalizing a date (September/October), negotiating block hotel rates, developing venues for entertainment and social gatherings, and getting commitments from those of you who will be attending. So stay tuned in the coming weeks for pesky e-mails informing you (as well as assisting us early of your commitments) of all the details.*

*For those who know for sure (sigh) that they will not be attending, please let us know* [*brentkids@sesi.com*](mailto:brentkids@sesi.com) *so that we can remove you from the distribution list if you wish.*

*Thank You*

*Ann, Marcia, Dave, Roy, Eddy & Jane*

***Subject: Reunion Vote Results***

***Posted Date: 03/01/2013***

March 1, 2013

Dear Brentonians:

The Reunion Poll and your access to vote ended as scheduled this morning. Thank you for all your input and patience as we went through this process. The results are as follows:

|  |
| --- |
| **Brent Reunion 2013 - Select One** |
| Cruise - (East Coast Port) |
| http://www.brentkids.com/cruise-poll/bar.gif |
| 8 Votes 15.38% |
| Cruise - (West Coast Port) |
| http://www.brentkids.com/cruise-poll/bar.gif |
| 4 Votes 7.69% |
| Cruise - (Central Coast Port) |
| http://www.brentkids.com/cruise-poll/bar.gif |
| 3 Votes 5.77% |
| Prior Locations (CA, TX, VA, NY) |
| http://www.brentkids.com/cruise-poll/bar.gif |
| 10 Votes 19.23% |
| New Locations (ME, Panama, NV, MO, WA, IL, LA) |
| http://www.brentkids.com/cruise-poll/bar.gif |
| 27 Votes 51.92% |
| **Total Votes 52** |

The Forum, though not closed, had 6 Topics, 575 Views (multiple by some) and 58 Posts/Replies.

The task at hand now will be the job of the Reunion Committee to rank & rate the location of the Fall Reunion based on the majority of the votes in Option 5 - *New Locations*. In our letter, *2013 Reunion Letter* link, posted under the <Reunions> tab of the website [www.brentkids.com](http://www.brentkids.com) and e-mailed to all of you, provided for a set of criteria to be applied by the Reunion Committee, criteria (a – e), posted on 02/01/13, *Category Mapping*. We hope to announce the results within a week after some research and evaluation. Rest assured that this Reunion, as our “last Hurrah” of the ‘50’s and ‘60’s generation of students at Brent will be the most memorable.

For those that cannot attend, or are not interested in attending, please e-mail [brentkids@sesi.com](mailto:brentkids@sesi.com) to be taken off the distribution list as we will be providing updates of our progress and organization efforts in putting this Reunion into high gear.

Thanks again for your participation!

Reunion Committee

Ann Lafferty

Dave Martin

Marcia Mau

Roy McDonald

Eddy Pay

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

***Subject: Reunion Forum (Makeover)***

***Posted Date: 02/11/2013***

*Sorry for the interruption on the Forum. In Geekspeak, the text area for your input was limited to only 256 characters. The new “Makeover” Forum is designed around the 5 Reunion Options plus one (Other-which is a collection of your input with no specific choice). The Forum has been populated with your e-mails that correlate to the Option choices. Please visit, view and participate.*

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

***Subject: Reunion Forum***

***Posted Date: 02/08/2013***

*We have installed a specific Reunion Forum or textual Chat (not a general Blog) on* [*www.brentkids.com*](http://www.brentkids.com) *where we can have a dialogue between the registered members for your ideas and opinions regarding the Reunion and the Option Categories. Your input and discussions will be helpful to the Reunion Committee in formulating the Committee’s decisions. The process and structure of the Poll results remains as is. Ideas from you on your 2013 Reunion will be helpful and appreciated. Please keep in mind that this is open only to registered members to voice their opinions and view/comment on the thread of conversations . Therefore, civility and agree-to-disagree will be appreciated. We reserve the right to remove any dialogue that appears offensive.*

*Please follow the instructions as posted before on the Poll process (Posted Date: 02/01/2013). Below the <Poll> link you will see the <Reunion Forum> link, click on that link, go through the login process and you will be provided a page of scrollable member opinions and the opportunity to comment/reply (at the end of the thread) by entering your name (your name is mandatory) and a text box to rant or rave as you wish. Click on <Submit> and visit another time to view other member comments/replies. The subject remains fixed as Brent Reunion 2013.*

*Thank You.*

*Reunion Committee*

*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**

***Subject: Poll***

***Posted Date: 02/01/2013***

*Please read before voting. The voting can only be accomplished through the* [*www.brentkids.com*](http://www.brentkids.com) *website. The USA Brent Kids website now has a Polling link in the Reunions tab currently related to a selection of a location for the 2013 Reunion to be held in the Fall of 2013. You are provided five categories to choose from and vote for by March 1, 2013. Some categories are grouped since a multitude of suggestions have been received and their growing volume restricts fixed Poll choices. The categories are:*

* *Cruise Ship (East Coast Port)*
* *Cruise Ship (West Coast Port)*
* *Cruise Ship (Central Coast Port)*
* *Prior Locations (CA, TX, VA, NY)*
* *New Locations (ME, Panama, NV, NO,WA, IL, LA)*

*The mapping of your choices are explained within this posting. You have to be registered on the website to vote (click on News tab if you are not registered). You have only one vote. If you make a mistake or change your mind before March 1, 2013, please e-mail me (*[*brentkids@sesi.com*](mailto:brentkids@sesi.com)*) so that I can reset your vote and allow you to vote again. Do not be in a hurry to vote. Investigate and digest the options and perhaps any changes made to this posting during the open voting period. Further communications, questions, ideas, etc. should be e-mailed to* [*brentkids@sesi.com*](mailto:brentkids@sesi.com)*.*

***Procedure (Voting):***

* *On your web browser enter the website address* [*www.brentkids.com*](http://www.brentkids.com) *or click on the address stated here.*
* *Click on the Tab labeled <Reunions> (not necessary to login at this time)*
* *Click on the link: <2013 Reunion Plans> - various formats are made available, choose the one supported on your computer.*
* *This posting will be displayed (it may ask you if you want to Open, Save or Save As, click on Open).*
* *Read the full posting since it is continuously updated.*
* *Exit once finished reading the Posting (or hit back page on your browser to return to the previous page)*
* *Click on the link <Poll> right below it.*
* *It will ask you to login by typing in your registered email address and password. Don’t forget to position your cursor on each field. If you are not registered, go to the News tab and follow the instructions.*
* *If successful at login the 5 categories will appear giving you the option buttons. Click on one of the 5 categories and then click on <Vote>.*
* *You will next see the voting results shown in a bar graph with percentages and number of votes per category.*
* *If you choose to just view the voting results, at any time, do not click on <Vote>, instead click on <vote results>*
* *If you attempt to vote more than once, it will remind you that you have already voted.*
* *Exit out of the website or click on other tabs as you wish*

***Category Mapping:***

*If you select option 4 or 5 of the Poll which are based on recommendations from many of you (details under* ***Fourth & Fifth*** *below), and the Poll indicates a majority in either of them, the committee will then decide which of the selections in the group is chosen based on having (a) Alumni on the ground who will volunteer to help organize the effort, (b) cost comparisons, (c) centrality to airline hub, (d) accommodations, and (e) entertainment. For example, if Option 4 is selected, all of the suggestions made by the individuals listed under “****Fourth****” for having the Reunion in the suggested USA City/State is evaluated against (a – e) to determine where we have Reunion 2013. If none of the suggestions meet the criteria (a – e), then the next higher % of the Poll results will be evaluated and so on. Democracy at work … I think.*

***Options (Cruises & Land based Reunion)***

***First****: Cruise (East Coast Port) - The following cruise is offered and the link provided will give you all the information regarding Port, Cruise Line, Dates, Approximate Cost/pp, Duration, and other pertinent information:*

* *Cruise Line – Holland America (ms Nieuw Amsterdam)*
* *Embark & Disembark Port – Ft. Lauderdale, FL*
* *Duration – 6 nights/7 days*
* *Ports of Call – Ft. Lauderdale, FL, Grand Turk (Turks & Caicos), San Juan (Puerto Rico), Philipsburg(Dutch)/St. Martin(French), Half Moon Cay (Bahamas), Ft. Lauderdale, FL*
* *Dates – October 27th 2013 4:00 PM – November 3rd 2013 7:00 AM*
* *Prices – Booking 60/90 days prior to departure ($499, $599, $799, $1399, $1799) and cheaper if less than 60 days.*
* *Travel Agents – Your own choice or following suggestions (mention “Brent Reunion Group”: Anatolia Moreno 312-943-7840 Ext. 83273* [*Anatalia.Moreno@aexp.com*](mailto:Anatalia.Moreno@aexp.com) *or Anoop Mittra 888-472-7847* [*amittra@cruiseplanners.com*](mailto:amittra@cruiseplanners.com)

*Click on this link for further details:*

[*http://www.hollandamerica.com/find-cruise-vacation/SpecialOffers.action?destCode=C&WT.mc\_id=email\_HEP1305SL&WT.dcsvid=621450220&stop\_mobi=yes*](http://www.hollandamerica.com/find-cruise-vacation/SpecialOffers.action?destCode=C&WT.mc_id=email_HEP1305SL&WT.dcsvid=621450220&stop_mobi=yes)

***Second****: Cruise (West Coast Port) – The following cruise is offered and the link provided will give you all the information regarding Port, Cruise Line, Dates, Approximate Cost/pp, Duration, and other pertinent information:*

* *Cruise Line – Holland America (ms Statendam)*
* *Embark Port – Vancouver, Canada*
* *Disembark Port – San Diego, California*
* *Duration – 5 nights/6 days*
* *Ports of Call – Hugs the Western Coast; Vancouver Canada, San Francisco CA, San Diego CA*
* *Dates – September 29th 2013 4:00 PM – October 4th 2013 7:00 AM*
* *Prices – Booking 60/90 days prior to departure ($349, $399, $599) and cheaper if less than 60 days.*
* *Travel Agents – Your own choice or following suggestions (mention “Brent Reunion Group”): Anatolia Moreno 312-943-7840 Ext. 83273* [*Anatalia.Moreno@aexp.com*](mailto:Anatalia.Moreno@aexp.com) *or Anoop Mittra 888-472-7847* [*amittra@cruiseplanners.com*](mailto:amittra@cruiseplanners.com)

*Click on this link for further details:*

[*http://www.icruise.com/5-night-pacific-coastal-cruise\_statendam\_9-29-2013.html*](http://www.icruise.com/5-night-pacific-coastal-cruise_statendam_9-29-2013.html)

***Third****: Cruise (Central Coast Port) - The following cruise is offered and the link provided will give you all the information regarding Port, Cruise Line, Dates, Approximate Cost/pp, Duration, and other pertinent information:*

* *Cruise Line – Princess (Caribbean Princess)*
* *Embark & Disembark Port – Houston, TX*
* *Duration – 6 nights/7 days*
* *Ports of Call – Houston, Cozumel, Roatan, Belize City, Houston*
* *Dates – November 9th 2013 4:00 PM – November16th 2013 7:00 AM*
* *Prices – Booking 60/90 days prior to departure ($649, $749, $999, $1,249) and cheaper if less than 60 days.*
* *Travel Agents – Your own choice or following suggestions (mention “Brent Reunion Group”): Anatolia Moreno 312-943-7840 Ext. 83273* [*Anatalia.Moreno@aexp.com*](mailto:Anatalia.Moreno@aexp.com) *or Anoop Mittra 888-472-7847* [*amittra@cruiseplanners.com*](mailto:amittra@cruiseplanners.com)

*Click on this link for further details:*

[*http://cruise.cruisesfrom.com/cs/Forms/CruiseResultsPage.aspx?AG=95&ports=8978&DF=11/1/2013&DT=11/1/2014&CD=-1*](http://cruise.cruisesfrom.com/cs/Forms/CruiseResultsPage.aspx?AG=95&ports=8978&DF=11/1/2013&DT=11/1/2014&CD=-1)

***Fourth****: (Prior Locations) – Suggestions are:*

* *Virginia/DC area, similar to the one held in 2002 – Louis Jurika*
* *Dallas/Rockwall – John & Julie Grant*
* *Virginia/DC area – Fred Crouter*
* *San Francisco – Eddy Pay*

***Fifth****: (New Locations) – Suggestions are:*

* *Santa Fe - Steve Griffiths*
* *Shrine Mont Orkney Springs, VA – Dick Banks*
* *Lake Tahoe – Eric Harrington*
* *New Orleans – Leilani Hino*
* *Bocas del Toro, Panama – Sally Ramirez* [*http://www.hotelitodelmar.com/*](http://www.hotelitodelmar.com/)
* *Panama Canal cruise – Pamela Nargie*
* *Las Vegas – Marcia Mau*
* *Chicago – Marcia Mau*
* *St. Louis – Fred Crouter*
* *Windjammer-Like cruise – King Amos*
* *Maine – Terry Lewis*
* *Seattle – Mark Pfeifer*
* *Vancouver – Eddy Pay*

*Happy Voting!*

***Subject: Cruise Awareness***

***Date Posted: 02/01/2013***

*In the event a Cruise is selected and for those of us who may not have been on a cruise recently, here are comparative costs and Do’s & Don’t you should be aware of. It is my take on five cruises I have been on (East Coast/Europe) and common to most all. If you have experiences to share, please e-mail* [*brentkids@sesi.com*](mailto:brentkids@sesi.com) *and I will include them in this posting as we go along.*

***Cruise Lines (my experiences):***

*Cunard – Excellent. Mostly Atlantic/Europe Crossings. Best for our age group.*

*Carnival – Worst. For teenagers and families with young children.*

*Princess – Leaning towards Carnival category, but tolerable.*

*Norwegian – Excellent.*

*Holland America – Next to Excellent.*

***Costs***

*Most all cruise lines provide a package deal in terms of costs (mainly accommodation, entertainment & food). When you think of it, an 8 day 7 night stay at any major hotel in a major city for the same services would run approximately $850.00 for one on the low side (or 120.00/day for one to include estimated meals and expenses), less any air travel. A cruise for the same services, would run approximately $650.00 or less for one (dependent on your state-room selection) or $93.00/day for one. But there are “surprise” costs that you should be aware of. First, every Line imposes a daily “Tip” or gratuity on your bill for the waiter that waits on you, the steward that makes up your room, to the butler that makes those funny animal figures with your towels. Normally it is around $12.00/day or $96.00 per stateroom. Expectations are that you would also leave an equivalent amount in your state-room upon departure if you believe you received superior service (which you normally do since they are cheerfully at your beck and call 24/7). Next, there are taxes, Port Fees, etc. that are usually included but* ***may*** *not be part of your reservation. One other trick of the trade is Dining. All Lines have a running buffet 24/7 on one or two of the decks. You will never go hungry, yet, the same food that is served at the buffets, should you elect to be guaranteed a dining room table with a waiter and wine specialist (forgot what they call them – Sommeliers? ), would cost you as high as $20.00/night for one if you dine elegantly in the evenings. They do not tell you that when they ask you what dining hour you prefer, 6:00, 7:00 or 8:00 PM. It magically appears on your bill at the end of the cruise. Last, room service, laundry, special services all have a price tag, so ask before you submit your room key (all-to-be-all temporary credit card). Given all of that, where you are now is close to the same costs as your one city stay, but consider the 3 to 4 ports-of-call you visit, the entertainment events 24/7, the unlimited food and beverages (non-alcoholic) and add those as costs and you will conclude that you have saved money by going on a cruise.*

***Cash & Credit***

*When you register at the Port for departure, they will ask for a Credit Card “retainer” to insure that they may charge the “Tip”, any purchases you made, any Port tax/fees if not included. (BTW – trying to pay with a personal credit card vs. the “all-to-be-all” card while you are on the cruise, is painful). Bring cash for your off-shore visits, Casino, and parking (if you drive to a Port in Ft. Lauderdale as I did ($100.00 for 8 day parking)). To get cash via credit card or check usually runs around 15%. Credit at the Casino is usually less (6%) to be used at the tables up to $1000.00/ day – wonder why!? One last item. Keep the “all-to-be-all” card they issue you (which serves as your room key, purchase card, embark/disembark ID, etc.), away from your cell phone. It gets demagnetized and you have to get a new one re-issued. That card is used for your embark/disembark to shore/Ports of Call (as well as your Passport in some cases).*

***Attire***

*Most cruises have a one or two night formal wear for dining at your reserved hour (if you so choose to). A tux, suit (jacket) and cocktail dresses are required. Otherwise, depending on the season, pack light with shorts pants and polo shirts/blouses for East Coast cruises. A jacket would come handy as well as an umbrella for off-shore visits.*

***Duty Free***

*There are many bargains to be had at the constant sales and special promotions aboard ship. Watches, Jewelry, and liquor can be had for as much as 60% off. The liquor, however, cannot be consumed while on-board. If you purchase any, they will deliver it to your state-room on your last day. That has two reasons, one more important than the other. First, they would prefer that you purchase your drinks by the glass (more cost) and two, liability in the event you get too drunk and go Postal.*

***Passport & Customs***

*You will need a passport if you wish to disembark at any of the Ports-of-Call. Make sure your passport is valid for a minimum of 6 months beyond your return date. When you make your reservations or supply your travel agent the information, be sure that the name you supply is identical to what is on your passport (middle initial or name). If you have a non-relative minor (less than 18 years old), you will need a parental release form or she/he cannot accompany you without his/her parents. I had a cousin of my daughter going with me and my daughter on one cruise and had to fax a parental form from her mother to the port authorities the last minute and almost missed the cruise. You will be given a Customs form to fill out for the end of your cruise. There are limits on what you can bring back to the States duty free. In all the five cruises I have been on, the Customs folks were all sleep at the time of departure and never checked anyone’s bags.*

***Entertainment (Shipboard)***

*The Love Boat has nothing on the current cruises. All night Piano Bar, Wine tasting sessions, Casino, Las Vegas type shows, dance halls (and in the case of the retired Cunard QE-II, Tea-time service promptly at 4:00 with white glove service and cucumber sandwiches), auctions, in-door/out-door pools and hot tubs, video/game parlors, Spa’s, fitness clubs, and a lot I cannot remember without a drink in my hand.*

***Entertainment (Port Excursions)***

*Several to choose from that can be purchased before the cruise or while you are on-board. From scuba diving to city tours to hiking, etc. My preference is to do my own thing. Get a cab at the port and take in the city and eat at the local restaurants. Normally you are given anywhere from 6 to 8 hours at a Port. Don’t miss the departure time or you will have to catch a plane to the next Port the ship calls.*

***Communication***

*Your cell phones will work but not always. If you have a smart phone, make sure you disable the Data option or you will find a large bill from your carrier upon return. Onboard ship they have internet and phone service availability. They may charge for their use. Your iPads, laptops, computers … leave them behind. You are on a cruise Reunion/Vacation!*

***Staterooms***

*There are basically four groups. Inside, Outside, Balcony, and Suite(s). If you plan on spending very little time (mostly for sleeping quarters) in your stateroom, choose the Inside. It is the cheapest and a bit noisier since it is usually on the lower decks close to the engine room and a bit more cramped. If you would like some sunlight in your room select Outside which will have a porthole and at least you will be able to see the white caps. The best, is Balcony. You don’t have to go up to the decks that have ocean view to enjoy the salt air and the scenery. Last is the suite. You will pay more for elbow room.*

***Disembarking***

*On the evening of your scheduled disembarkation, the ship will announce over the PA system that you have the option to leave early by taking/lugging your own bags/luggage with you and assemble at the deck of Disembarkation for “early” departures or leaving you bags outside your stateroom before 12:00 AM with proper tags and the porters would take them for you to be collected at Customs. If you have a flight to catch, I would recommend that you take the “early” route since even that line becomes a long one. The other advantage is that the Customs folks do not pay too much attention to early departures (since they know they are in a hurry), but if your bags are assembled at Customs, they may have to earn their pay and randomly select you for bag check.*

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*



***Subject: Initial e-mail for Reunion 2013 Plans***

***Posted Date: 01/16/2013***

*Dear Brentonians of the ‘60’s era,*

*Before Hovaround becomes our major investment, or the flexible cane the Christmas gift from our grandkids. Before the richness of our experiences, incomprehensible to many, in lands far away become forgotten by time. Before the bonds of our camaraderie fade within that hour-glass, lets join for a 2013 Brent High School Reunion!*

*Eddy Pay and I (and many others) have been throwing around the idea of a “last-Hurrah” for our generation of Brentonians. There is approximately $3,000.00 in seed money that has been banked by David Martin useable for this adventure. In the coming weeks I will be setting up a “polling” system on the website (*[*www.brentkids.com*](http://www.brentkids.com)*) where you can vote for the selection that we initially put together. Selection cut-off date will be March 1st for a Reunion in September/October time-frame. The list of ideas (in order of preference at this time) are as follows. Any suggestions will be welcome, and these are our initial thoughts:*

* *Cruise Ships – (7 to 8 days) East, Central or West departure points to be determined by committed participant clusters based on the polling; pluses are logistics, captivity, activity, & costs(group discounts); minuses are cluster phobia.*
* *Prior Locations – San Francisco, Virginia, & Texas; pluses are familiarity & freedom of movement; minuses are logistics, costs & been-there-done-that.*
* *New Locations – NOLA (New Orleans, LA), Europe, Baguio, South America; pluses are WOW; minuses are costs & logistics.*

*We will form a small committee (and hope that it does not create a Camel) to explore the selections based on the poll results and formulate much more details for your eventual selection (such as destinations, estimated costs, duration, dates, group discounts, airfare options, accommodations, etc.). For now, the willingness to participate is the first salvo where we can determine the level of interest. Nothing is etched in stone at this point. I will send out another e-mail regarding the voting poll very soon and hope that it will excite your participation as it may be the last time for us to get together as a large group.*

*Cheers … Roy & Eddy*