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3rd Issue 25th Year

01 June 2017

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Ron Zimmerman
President Emeritus

Association's Web Site: www.greatsitkin.org

From the President: What a month! Joy and I put the house up for sale for a downsize thing. A week after we put it on the market, we went to Ireland for nine days. Ireland was beautiful and yes, there were millions of castles so the term ABC came to being: Another Bloody Castle!

We had to partake of Irish coffee, Guinness, Southwick's Killarney whiskey, Jameson, also food and entertainment. Do you see where this is going? Half ways through the trip, we get an E-mail: "Your home has a buyer." After the 16th of June, we will have a new address!

Everything is moving along for the reunion which I will cover in a different article. Think about whom you want for officers next year and if you would like to host the 2019 reunion. If you feel uneasy about doing a reunion, there are several of us who will help direct you on how to do it. It really is not that hard. Most Convention & Visitor Bureaus in that city will help out a lot.

That's it for me!

New finds: John W. Marryott, '68 William E. Miller, SH2, '67 - '70

Jim Dunno, President

#### Vice President's Words of Wisdom:

Greetings all!

As Membership Chairman, I'm reporting 89 paid members. Any changes to home/E-mail addresses and/or phone numbers have been reflected in the name and address master list. All Award pins have been sent. I wish everyone a peaceful Memorial Day!

#### Tom Stachelski, Vice President

Secretary Report: Let's begin looking forward to connecting again in Buffalo, NY for our 25th USS Great Sitkin reunion. Many activities are planned for the reunion which begins on Wednesday, September 6 and ends with breakfast on Sunday, September 10, 2017.

**Nominations for Officers**: Nominations for the Executive Board positions are now open. All positions are up for reelection every year. Present officers may be reelected. Only active

members who have annual dues current are eligible to serve. All nominations for office must be received by the Association's Secretary (me), no later than August 19, 2017.

Nominations must be in writing and sent by either postal service or E-mail. Nominees will be contacted by the Secretary to insure their acceptance of the nomination and their willingness to serve. If you have any questions concerning nominations or serving, please contact me.

#### Joe Rios, Secretary

**Greetings from Repair 3:** DC3 Kaiser, with the eight o'clock reports:

April kind of fell apart real fast here in the George O'Sphere. My dad passed away on April 2nd. No regrets, as he lived a long, fulfilling life of 90 years. Dad was a member of the Greatest Generation serving as a U.S. Navy Sailor in WWII. He left me many memories I'll live with forever.

Another April highlight was my being able to go to Panama as part of a team teaching shipboard firefighting to "bomberos" with the Canal de Panama Fire Department. This Great Sitkin story is the topic of the June issue.

Have you ever gone somewhere to search out a memory? Where did a family member live; maybe in Europe? Looked for the motel you stayed at on your honeymoon? Went to your first high school reunion after being out of school for 40 years?

As part of my prep for the Panama visit, I did some research on the Great Sitkin trip through the canal on her way to WESTPAC in 1968. There are a number of good pictures on our website of her transit, a couple of which are in this edition. I've asked Dorothy to also put a picture in of her husband, Mike, looking dapper as an ME3 in his whites, ashore at the canal. While a ship's visit to the canal is listed for fall, 1950, there is no record of a visit when Mike was aboard her, but pictures don't lie, right?

With those memories in tow and with the pictures stored on my I-Phone, off I went to Panama. Our first day there, we got a comprehensive six-hour tour of the canal locks on the Pacific side. It was then I had my memory moment. Looking at the

exact place the ship went through in 1968. It was kind of like the experience we had at the former MOTBY in Bayonne last September. The old ship is gone, but our memories live on.

When the Great Sitkin made her canal passage, the locks were part of the U.S. Canal Zone. The territory was actually U.S. property of sorts. But an agreement fostered by President Carter in 1977 led to the eventual transfer of the whole operation to the Panamanians in 2000.

A new, set of locks were built, opening in 2016. All traces of U.S. involvement are gone, at least from a military standpoint. And that, Shipmates, is your history lesson for this issue!









Speaking of memories and history, I really hope to see you in Buffalo this September. Jim & Joy have a great trip lined

provided ammo for. Enjoy your summer!

George Kaiser, Treasurer

#### The Chaplain's Corner: "Good Day to all of you."

Well, the gardens are planted and starting to grow. I can't wait for some fresh cucumbers and tomatoes.

We are celebrating the 25th year of the Association this year. I remember my first reunion which was in Mobile, AL. We were excited about coming, making new friends, and seeing old ones. We got up that morning to go to the airport and heard from our daughter that one of the World Trade Center towers was hit by an airplane. We turned our TV on and after a few minutes we watched the other tower being hit. We couldn't believe what we just saw!

We finished loading up to go to the airport. When we arrived, they told us "all planes were ordered out of the sky and we were not going anywhere by plane." We returned home, loaded our SUV and drove down to Mobile. All day long we listened to the radio and the news reports. I had a terrible feeling of what was going to happen next.

We made it to Mobile and met up with others who made it there. It was a solemn time that week, but it was one of the best reunions we ever had!

God has truly blessed our nation through all of this and continues to watch over us.

If you haven't been to a reunion you need to try and come. You won't regret it, nor will you forget it!

It's time to say good-bye for now. See you all in Buffalo in September.

#### **Honor Roll Update:**

None to report

May the Lord Bless and Keep You.

Mark Rucker, Chaplain

#### **Bayonne to Bermuda Cruise Update:**

Several shipmates and spouses have expressed interest in this cruise, so I coordinated with Celebrity to establish the group. Final per person rates are:

\$ 894 for an inside cabin; \$1,113 for an ocean view cabin; and \$1,413 for a veranda (balcony).

Each cabin will automatically receive a up. We'll be able to relive more Great \$50 shipboard credit. Ocean view and Sikin memories on the two U.S. Navy balcony cabins also receive their choice

locks, it occurred to me that this was the museum ships there, both of which we of an alcoholic beverage package for 2 guests which includes tips (valued at \$454 per person), paid tips for 2 guests (valued at up to \$98 per person), unlimited Internet for 2 guests (valued at \$264 per person), or extra onboard credit for 2 guests (valued at \$150 per person).

> We have 5 interior cabins, 3 ocean view cabins, and 2 veranda (balcony) cabins on hold until early June; so if you are interested, I suggest making reservations as soon as possible. After that, rates may change. There are only 5 interior cabins available throughout the ship. If more people are interested in ocean view or veranda cabins, we can probably get them at the same price.

> The \$500 deposit per cabin is fully refundable through January 29, 2018, when final payment is due. After that, the refundable amount decreases every month. I made my deposit last week.

> To see more about the cruise on the Celebrity website, go to:

> http://tinyurl.com/z8docvt, then search for the "April 29, 2018 cruise from Bayonne to Bermuda.'

> To make a reservation, contact Celebrity directly at 888-727-4907. Tell them the group number is 7678010 for the "Great Sitkin Bermuda Sailaway" departing April 29 aboard the Celebrity Summit.

> If you are interested in sharing a cabin, please contact me or post on the Great Sitkin Facebook page. I will try to coordinate any singles.

> If you have any questions, please contact me via E-mail or phone. I am on an RV tour of the national parks, so it may take a day or two to respond.

#### Mike Kleinbeck, Cruise Coordinator

mike.kleinbeck@gmail.com

Mobile: 301.904.4122

PO Box 296 Dowell, MD 20629

Comments from the Editor: Since the Association will celebrate its 25th reunion in Buffalo, NY, I thought it would be "nifty" to highlight the past 24 reunions. We've celebrated our reunions in many cities & states through the years. Some of our Shipmates are no longer with us; some are unable to attend anymore, but the memories of all will last us a lifetime!

**Dorothy Hodnichak, Editor** 

HAPPY 4TH OF JULY!

The Executive Board

#### Joseph A. Rios, SN



Date Entered Service: 20 June, 1963 - Date Discharged from active duty: 19 June, 1967, From the Reserve 20 June, 1969

Aboard the USS Great Sitkin '64 - '67

#### My Story of Meeting Pope Paul VI



"If you want peace, work for justice." Quote from Pope Paul VI

On my second Mediterranean cruise in 1966, while in Italy, I had the privilege of going with a group of Sailors from other ships to see many fine churches and other special sites in Rome. As part of this trip, a group of us had the privilege of meeting Pope Paul VI. On that particular day at St. Peter's Basilica, the Pope met multiple groups, and he spoke in many languages.

In life as a Roman Catholic, you meet Cardinals, Monsignors, Bishops, Priests and the like. Coming from New York, I have met two Cardinals. To meet the person who is the highest-ranking member in the Roman Catholic religion was guite an honor.

I also had the privilege to kiss the ring of the Pope. He spoke to us in English; he was very funny, and he also blessed whatever special articles we had with us. I brought a Rosary I purchased for my mother, and he blessed it. When I came back home, I gave that Rosary to my mother, Angelina.

As part of this Naval group, some people who visited the Pope were not Catholic. They might have been Protestant or members of another branch of Christianity. Despite these differences, we all felt good about just being "a person" who was acceptable as we were. In today's society, people have many religions, and I especially appreciate when people share positivity and happiness instead of judgment.

This was a great honor in my life, and I count meeting Pope Paul VI as a real blessing.

#### Joseph A. Rios, SN 1965 - 1966



1965 During rearming Carrier in background



1965 Supply



1965 The Island of Rhodes, Greece



1966 The Colosseum in Rome, Italy

#### USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association - Ship's Store Order Form

Name:	-	ne:	AE-17	
Name: Address:				
Ball Caps - \$15 each All Blue Note: Where sizes are indicated and indica	- ·		Ship's Ball Caps \$15 each Blue Solid Back: Blue	
USS Great Sitkin Ball Caps (solid back)	Quantity:	•		
USS Great Sitkin AE17 Ball Caps (solid back)	Quantity:			
Shirts: Sizes				
USS Great Sitkin Polo Shirts - Blue - \$25 M L XL XXL	Quantity:			
USS Great Sitkin Polo Shirts - Gray - \$25 M L XL XXL	Quantity:		Polo Shirts	
USS Great Sitkin Polo Shirts - Pink - \$25 S M L XL	Quantity:		Men's and Ladies Navy blue, Grey, Pink \$25 each	
USS Great Sitkin Ship's Picture T-Shirt - \$18 S M L XL XXL	•		(Navy blue not shown)	
USS Great Sitkin Ship's Picture Sweatshirt \$25 L XL XXL	. Quantity:			
Jacket/Hoodie:		DALES SECTION	Ship's Picture Shirts	
USS Great Sitkin All Weather Hooded Zip-Front Jacket - Blue			T-Shirts \$18 each	
(Note: Jackets are on special order) \$45 M L XL XXL	Quantity:	17.0	Sweat Shirts \$25 each	
Aluminum water bottles: \$10	Quantity:	PROUDLY SERVING	Back of shirt has picture, Front has Ship's patch design	
All prices include postage.	F-17) Associatio	n		
Please make check or money order out to USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association				
All orders should be sent to: <b>USS Great Sitkin Association</b> c/o George Kaiser				
311 Oak Lane				
Glenolden, PA 19036			VSS GREAT SITKW	
Note: <b>DO NOT</b> include your "Dues" payment in with your Ship S	Store Order		AE-17	
They need to be separate checks or money orders.				
Questions about Ship's Store items can be E-mailed to: <a href="mailed-to:ae17dc3@verizon.net">ae17dc3@verizon.net</a>				
		All Weather Jacket Navy Blue, \$45 each	Aluminum Water Bottle \$10 each	
		(Jackets are Special Order		
USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association Active Membership:	Active Member	status in the USS Great Sitkin (	AE-17) Association is open	
to all crew members. Dues are \$20.00 per year and are used to cover the cost of the newsletters, website hosting, domain name, administra-				
tive and other expenses. The membership year is 1 January through 31 December. Membership cards will be issued to all crew members paying dues and will identify the individual by name, expiration date and number of years of Active Membership.				
Payment of dues is not required to participate in any official f	unction of the Ass	sociation but is required for bei	ng an Active Member. No-	
tices pertaining to dues will be posted on the website and in the	newsletters. Act	ive Members must have their d	lues paid prior to the annual	
meeting each year in order to retain their status and eligibility to To become an Active Member of the USS Great Sitkin (Al	vote. E-17) Association	nlease complete the applicati	ion form below and send it.	
along with a check made payable to:	2 17) 1 <b>1</b> 2222 <b>21</b> 44121	, prouse templete une approun	ton round o one in white bond in	
USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association, c/o	George Kaiser,	311 W. Oak Lane, Glenold	len, PA 19036	
USS Great Sitkin (AE1-17) Associatio	n Active Mem	ber Application & Renew	al Form	
Name:		F-Mail:		
Address:				
City, State, Zip: Application Date: [ ] New [ ] Renewal				
Amount Submitted: \$ [ ] 2017 YR (\$20.00) [ ] 2018 YR (\$20.00) [ ] 2019 YR (\$20.00) [ ] Please send me a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws.				
[ ] I least send the a copy of the Constitution and Dylaws.				

Signature:

#### **Memories of 24 USS Great Sitkin Reunions**



1993 1st Reunion, Mineola, Long Island, NY

Sitkin Shipmates

G. Schnyer - D. Indelicato



A STATE OF THE STA



1994 2nd Reunion, Norfolk, VA

**USS Estocin (FFG-15)** 

1995 3rd Reunion, Branson, MO









Kenny Roger's Branson Belle

Sitkin Shipmates - Branson, MO

Glenn & Norma Frankenbach

**Bobby Vinton** 







1996 4th Reunion, New London, CT

USS Groton (SSN-694)

1997 5th Paunian Orlando







1997 5th Reunion, Orlando, FL

Del & John Shadgett

**Bob Cameron** 







1998 6th Reunion, Gatlinburg, TN

Bill Donath, Engineer at Dollywood



**Great Sitkin Ladies** 

D. Hauser's - R. Berg's J. Kelly Grandsons









**USS Cod Submarine** 

Wm. G. Mather Steamship Chief Wahoo

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

2000 8th Reunion, Cleveland, OH



9th Reunion, Mobile, AL





Memorial Ceremony on Ship



Theresa & Ed Unterseher



Mary & George Kaiser



C. W. Ross



**USS Alabama Tour** 



2002 10th Reunion, Omaha, NE



**Freemont Dinner Train** 

**Strategic Air Command Museum** 

Carlson, Kelly, Hodnichak, Carlson

Hauser - McClane, Kaiser - Zimmerman

**Robert & Bertrice Pratt** 

2003 11th Reunion, Virginia Beach, VA - Williamsburg Tour, Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre, Naval Station Tour, Banquet





**USS Wisconsin** 



Mike LaFauci Robert Buchwald's



Ted Clausen's



Joe Theisen's



**USS Ronald Reagan** (We saw from afar)



2004 12th Reunion, Corpus Christi, TX Don & Patti McClane



King Ranch **USS Lexington Tour** 













Sally, Jason, Ron Zimmerman Jenn Hauser Sam Carolluzzi









Kiesel



Ann & Jerry Nelson Ed O'Brien Ann/George Mitchell



**Dixie Stampede** 



NASA Tour, Dixie Stampede Show/Dinner, BBQ, Titanic & Ripley's Believe It or Not, and Banquet



2007 15th Reunion, **Baton Rouge, LA** 



"I request permission to come aboard, Sir"



WWII Museum



John Cornwall, Mike Epperson



**Richard Hatfield** 



Jason Zimmerman **Family** 



Jim & Joy Dunno 2008 16th Reunion, Cincinnati, OH



**Air Force Museum** Dayton, OH





Cruise and Show, City Tour, Saturday night banquet. So much fun!



Patsy Rucker, 3-Generation Karadeema's, The Whitford's **Hofbrauhaus** Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Base Chapel for Memorial Service, Stern Wheeler Paddle Board Dinner



**USS Constitution** 



**Battleship Cove** 







USS Joseph P. Kennedy Pina & Vince Albanese **Ed Hart** JFK Library

Graduation ceremonies, **Great Lakes Naval Station** Navy's ONLY Boot Camp



Kathie & Paul Marsan



Diane & Carl Peck



2010 18th Reunion, Naperville, IL - Downtown Chicago, Soldier Field, Cantigny Museum, Navy Pier & Cruise

Jay Bryant Connie & Pat **Pasquarella** 



**Phil & Barbara Tinnes** 



Wayne Agee Family at Lookout Mountain



Marie & Fred Gallagher



Mary & Neil Pumphrey



**Carl Franke Family** 

2011 19th Reunion, Chattanooga, TN - Train Station, Chickamauga Battlefield, National Cemetery & Museum, Rock City, BBQ!



2012 20th Reunion, Baltimore, MD



**Korean Memorial** Washington, DC



**USS Great Sitkin Dedication Ceremony** 



Officers Kaiser, Zimmerman, Dunno, Chaplain Rucker, Navy Memorial



Joe Theisen



2013 21st Reunion, Mobile, AL



Joe Rios



Jim & Gerry Perko



Pensacola Naval Air Sta. John Snyder G. Mitchell, Walt Dodson





Gene & Nora McNeill







Jim & Mary Connallon





2015 23rd Reunion. Tampa, FL American Victory Ship



Jim Connallon, Mark Rucker



Chris/David/Linda Blansett



The Applegate's



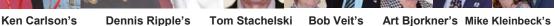
Bill Swiecicki The Huzinec's

Ybor City & H.B. Plant Museums, Barbeque at the pool, Tampa Tour, Salvador Dali Museum



2016 24th Reunion, NJ - 9/11 Memorial Museum & WTC Grounds, MOTBY, Grief Memorial, Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, Banquet







## USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association 25th Annual Reunion Itinerary - September 6 - 10, 2017 Buffalo, NY

**Headquarters:** Millennium Hotel

2040 Walden Ave. Buffalo, NY 14225 Phone: 716-681-2400

Reservations: 1-800-323-3331 Mention "USS Great Sitkin Reunion"

Room Rates: \$125.00 per night + tax. (If you wish to upgrade to a courtyard room, add \$10 per night)

Special room rate will apply 3 days before & 3 days after. Check in: 4:00 p.m. Check out: 11:00 a.m.

10% off breakfast and anything purchased through the restaurant or lounge. (Mention Sitkin) Complimentary on-site parking. The hotel also offers a courtesy shuttle service within the area

Last day to book special hotel rate is: August 7, 2017.

Airport: Buffalo Niagara International Airport (BUF) is close by. Car rental available at the airport. Courtesy

shuttle service: There is a phone in the baggage area titled, "Millennium." Pick up the phone; pushing

the button will connect you to the front desk of the hotel. Ask for pick-up.

Amtrak: Get off at the Depew Station & look for phone titled, "Millennium." Same setup.

Reunion Package: (1 Person - \$185.00) (2 People - \$370.00) (3 People - \$555.00) (See registration form)

Wednesday: 9/6 Hospitality room is the (PTC) Preferred Traveler's Club Room on the 1st floor

**6:00 p.m.** A **Welcome Reception** will be held in the Courtyard. The following food will be provided during the first hour: Hors D'oeuvres, Wine and Beer. Cash bar after 1st hour.

Thursday: 9/7 9:00 a.m. Load buses for a tour of the Buffalo Naval & Military Park. The Memorial Service

will be held on the Cruiser USS Little Rock. (10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. for park & museum)

Lunch - There is a place to eat in the main building.

Note change 5:00 p.m. Picnic Lunch & Pool Party at the hotel!

In time: Buffalo's specialties: Chicken Wings & Beef on Weck Buns

Friday: 9/8 9:00 a.m. Load buses for Old Fort Niagara for a tour of the fort and have a box lunch before

loading the buses again for Niagara Falls and a ride on the "Maid of the Mist." We will arrive

back at the hotel around 6:00 p.m.

**Saturday: 9/9 9:00 a.m.** The annual business meeting will be held in the PTC Hospitality Room.

**Free time** after the business meeting until the Banquet.

6:00 p.m. Cocktails - Cash Bar

**7:00 p.m.** Annual Banquet Buffet of Seasonal Fruit Display, Antipasto Display w/Tomato & Mozzarella Display w/Basil Vinaigrette, Sliced Roast Top Round of Beef, Lemon Glazed Chicken Breast, Penne Pasta w/Marinara, Au Gratin Potatoes, Vegetable Medley and Dessert.

Music provided by a DJ from 6 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Sunday: 9/10 Farewell Breakfast in the Courtyard











USS Croaker (SS-246)

**USS Little Rock (CG-4)** 

**USS The Sullivans (DD-537)** 

### **Naval & Military Park**

Thursday, Bus leaves at 9:00 a.m. Museum hours: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.











Sub Sail of the USS Boston

Rotocycle, "Hog" M41 light tank in service from '53 to present, mfg. by GM

**UH-1** Huey-Vietnam

The Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park is a museum on the shore of Lake Erie, in Buffalo, NY. It is home to several decommissioned US Naval vessels, including the Cleveland-class cruiser USS Little Rock, the Fletcher-class destroyer, USS The Sullivans, and the submarine USS Croaker.





McDonnell F-101A Voodoo

Nasty Class Fast Patrol Boat (PTF)

**USAAF P39 Aircobra - WWII** 







display at the park. Included is the Gyrodyne X-Ron 1 Rotocycle, one-man helicopter used by the US Marine Corps in the 50s/60s, an Army M41 Walker Bulldog tank used in the Korean War, a UH-1 Huey flown in Vietnam, an Air Force F-101A Voodoo flown by the NY Air National Guard's 136th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, a Nasty class Fast Patrol Boat (PTF) used by the Navy in Vietnam, a USAAF P-39 Airacobra manufactured at Bell Aircraft/ Buffalo which saw service in WWII & other aircraft.

There are a variety of smaller vehicles, vessels, & aircraft on



Other attractions in Buffalo, NY:





**Buffalo Botanical Gardens** 

O P P

н

**Albright-Knox Art Gallery** 



**Larkin Market** 

Frank Lloyd Wright Darwin Martin House



**Buffalo Zoo** 

Remember: To see attractions in Niagara Falls, Canada, YOU MUST HAVE A PASSPORT!









Niagara Falls at Night

Midway w/Ripley's Believe It Or Not

Casino Niagara







Floral Clock







Minolta Tower



#### **Reunion Update**

This is the <u>last</u> newsletter before the September reunion. If you haven't already, please make your hotel reservations and submit your reunion registration form by the deadline:

#### **DEADLINE** is Monday, August 7, 2017

All the information is in this newsletter and on the USS Great Sitkin Website.

A change has been made for Thursday when we go to the Naval and Military Park. We will be at the park from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. so we will have time to tour and have the Honor Ceremony. There is a bar/grill place to grab a bite while we are there.

The picnic has been moved to 5:00 p.m. at the hotel.

Again, if in your spare time you want to go to Canada to see the Falls, Fort Erie, the Whirlpool, Niagara Zip Line or another tourist trap, <u>you need a passport</u>.

Jim & Joy Dunno

Phone: 740-817-2177

E-mail: mgdjim60@gmail.com

Reunion registration form - Reverse side

#### USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association BUFFALO, NEW YORK September 6th thru 10th, 2017

Crew Member's Name and Age at Reunion Date	Years Served Aboard the Sitkin
Home Address	
Phone and/or Cell Number	E-mail Address
Name (s) of Others Attending Reunion	
	# Seniors (65 yrs. and over)
"Reunion Pa	
Welcome Reception, Buffalo and Erie County Na Fort Niagara with lunch at the Park, "Maid of the I w/DJ providing music from the 40's thru	Mist" Boat Ride, Free time, Annual Banquet,
1 Person \$185.00 2 People	\$370.00 3 People \$555.00
Box lunches at Old Fort Niagara: Please select one fo	r each person going. All include chips & drinks
1) Hot Dog3) Cr	neeseburger4) Chicken
Total Amount Enclosed: Signa	
Make checks payable to: <u>USS Gre</u>	eat Sitkin (AE-17) Association
Mail Registration form and payment to:	
Jim Dunno 326 Wood S Johnstown, 0	
Questions: E-mail: mgdjim60@gmail.com OR Call	Jim @ 740-817-2177
	vith your reunion payment. Thank you!
Deadline for submission of Reunion Regist	

Please note: The tours and events are booked and paid in advance. Any cancellations <u>before</u> the deadline will be refunded.