

A faint, blue-tinted image of the Statue of Liberty is positioned on the left side of the page. The statue is shown from the waist up, holding a torch in its right hand and a tablet in its left. The background of the entire page is white with light blue watercolor splatters and dots.

# ACS

## *newsletter*

*February 2011*

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Effective December 15, 2010, the U.S. Embassy-contracted courier is 2GO Courier.

# We're Moving Next Door



Artist Rendering of New VA Building

American Citizens Services will be located on the second floor of the new building while both Immigrant and Non-Immigrant Visas will be located on the ground level.

All offices will have more space and more comfortable public areas including 140 seats in the ACS waiting area shared with the Social Security Administration. During a tour of the new facility, the Consul General Mike Schimmel stated, "I have not seen such ample space for clients in a consular section before. The design really seemed to have considered their needs... Q-Matic signage was more than adequate; acoustics in the interviewing windows were excellent; the balcony and stairwell were tastefully designed; the public restrooms – all handicap-equipped – were carefully placed. Really nice to see."

When you visit the new building for U.S. citizen services, look for the ACS line and have your appointment

**The Consular section will move less than 500 feet to the other side of the Embassy's chancery compound into a new building in the first quarter of calendar year 2011.**

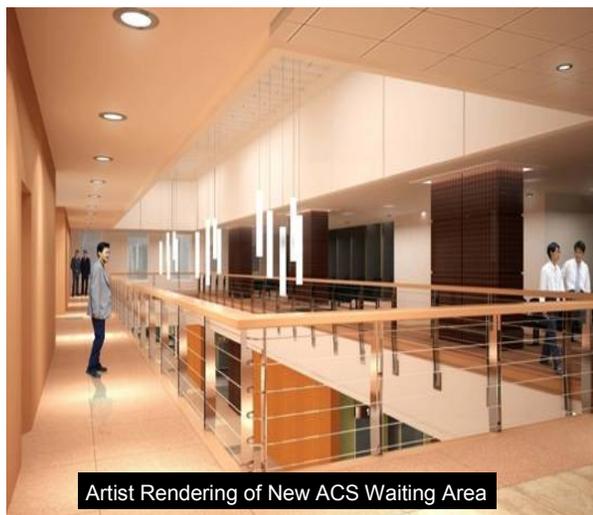
confirmation and passport available for the security guard to help facilitate your entry into the building.

The Veterans Affairs Regional Office and Outpatient Clinic completed their moves and united in a new office building on the Embassy's Seafront compound, which is located 2.5 miles south of the Embassy's

Chancery compound on Roxas Boulevard next to Cuneta Astrodome. The co-location allows the Regional Office and Outpatient Clinic to regain a physical presence of being "ONE VA" not seen since their physical separation in 1960.

Although VA has always worked under the concept of ONE VA, the move under one roof will further strengthen the ability to promote working in unison to give U.S. Veterans in the Philippines a one stop shop for all of their health and benefit needs.

There are no VA offices on the same compound as the Consular section and the Embassy offers no transportation service between the Chancery and Seafront compounds. Like ACS, many of the services provided by VA require an appointment. Please plan accordingly to allow extra time to travel between the two facilities so you don't miss your appointment.



Artist Rendering of New ACS Waiting Area

# CRBA Applications Made Easy

Scheduling, canceling, and rescheduling of an appointment for a Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) application can now be done online. In line with passport and notarial services, you make the appointment after gathering all of the necessary documents. The Embassy will not accept applications received through the mail and will not schedule CRBA application appointments over the phone. The appointment system allows us to plan and adjust for fluctuating demand and will make for a smoother, more predictable visit to the Embassy. This new system will also cut down on the time you spend in the ACS waiting room!

Online you'll find a list of required documents as well as each form to be completed and printed, which must be brought with you to the interview. To avoid severe inconvenience, please carefully read the requirements for a CRBA application and follow the instructions to apply. Remember that the child applicant is required to make a physical appearance at the time of the interview and that it is preferable both parents accompany him or her.

If you schedule an appointment and discover later you cannot arrive at the Embassy at the selected time, please be considerate to other applicants and cancel your appointment 48 hours or more before your appointment. We have noticed a trend of applicants not appearing for their scheduled appointments and not cancelling them. We strongly urge people not to do this as it inconveniences other applicants who might have all their documents and are just waiting for an appointment.

**For more information regarding CRBA applications, visit the U.S. citizen services' Reports of Birth and Derivative Citizenship page:**  
<http://manila.usembassy.gov/service/citizenship.html>.





# ARE YOU A SMART TRAVELER?

It was formerly known as the Internet Based Registration System and provides the same great services. Enrolling is voluntary and costs nothing, but it should be a big part of your travel planning and security.

STEP allows you to enter information about your trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. In 2010, the Philippines welcomed about 560,000 U.S. travelers and the vast majority encountered no difficulties during their visit. However, ACS in Manila and the Consular Agency in Cebu assisted almost 1,000 Americans who were victims of crime, accident, or illness, or whose family and friends needed to contact them in an emergency. Additionally, ACS monitored six typhoons, four earthquakes, three imminent volcanic eruptions, two bombings at an airport and a bus, three ferry accidents, and one major bus crash. When an emergency happens, or if natural disaster, terrorism, or civil unrest strike during your travel, we can be your source of assistance and information. By informing us about your trip or residence abroad, you help us locate you when you might need us the most.



**The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country.**

In addition to emergency communication, enrolling with Embassy Manila through STEP puts you on our Warden Email list. Through Warden Messages we notify American citizens of threats to their safety and security, as well as provide information on upcoming Embassy outreach events. You will also receive the ACS Newsletter that contains articles of interest to U.S. citizens in the Philippines.

To enroll, visit <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>. You will first create an account by clicking on the "Create an Account" link and following the instructions provided. This allows you to select a username and password so that you can access your travel data at any time. The account will also contain your personal information so that it can be saved and used again whenever you travel abroad, not just to the Philippines. The personal information section includes basic information

about you, and also an emergency contact who is not traveling with you. Once you have created an account, you can view your profile and add trips or overseas residences to sign up with a specific U.S. embassy, such as Manila, or consulate. (Please note: Consulate agencies like the one in Cebu are not listed.) Click on the "Add Trip" button or "Add Overseas Residence" buttons to add this information. Follow through the pages, and complete as much information as you have available. There are very few required fields, but thorough information enables us to help you more efficiently. You will receive a confirmation email to ensure that you are signed up correctly.



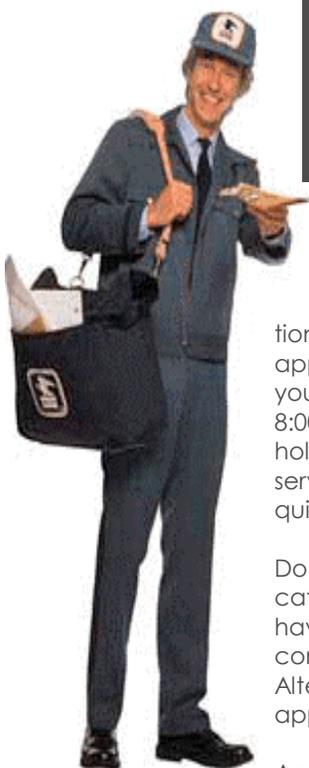
# Make Sure Your Vote Counts



The November 2010 election season is over but now is the time to register to vote if you're not already registered with your local election board. During the mid-term elections in November, the Embassy facilitated voter information, ballots, and election materials. Some voters registered early, received their materials, and ensured their votes were counted. Others waited until days before the election to make inquiries how and where to vote. They were disappointed to discover they missed their opportunity to make their voice heard. Act now to prepare for future elections and exercise your right to vote!

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) website, <http://www.fvap.gov/>, provides current information for uniformed service members and their families as well as U.S. citizens living outside of the U.S.

## New Courier 2Go Now Accepting Applications



Effective December 15, 2010, the U.S. Embassy-contracted courier is 2GO Courier (<http://www.2go.com.ph/>). The previous service provider, Air21 no longer accepts U.S. passport applications. For passport applications not covered by the online appointment, you may submit your documents by mail or you may call 2GO Courier at 528-7136 (press 6), between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday to Saturday, except on holidays. Please read all the instructions for the passport service you need and check carefully if the service requires an online appointment or not.

Do not include your payment when you mail your application to us. We will email you once your documents have been received. You will be given instructions to come to the Embassy to pay the application fee. Alternatively, you may send a representative to pay the application fee on your behalf.

Applicants who have requested and paid for courier services of Air21 prior to December 15, 2010 will continue to be served until all the courier services they paid for have been completed.

For more information regarding Passport applications and to check if your application requires an appointment, visit the U.S. citizen services' Passports page: <http://manila.usembassy.gov/service/passports.html>.

**American Association of the Philippines**  
proudly presents the

**62nd Annual  
George Washington Birthday  
Celebration**

**Saturday  
19 February 2011  
6:00 P.M.**

**New World Hotel**  
Greenbelt, Makati City

**Buffet**  
Live Music - Fun Quiz - Prizes  
Silent Auction - Raffle

**Cocktail Attire  
Php. 2,500**

Join members of the community in an evening of good food, good company and for a good cause—to raise funds to support the programs of the American Association of the Philippines, which include aid to indigent members of the community, RH negative blood donor sourcing, stewardship of the American Historical Collection, and more. All nationalities welcome!

For information on Sponsorship and/or Tickets please call Michael at 892-5198 or 0917-890-9649 Email: [aap@eastern.com.ph](mailto:aap@eastern.com.ph)

## AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES

**Consul General: Michael R. Schimmel**  
**ACS Chief: Michael E. Garrote**  
**Office: (63) (2) 301-2246 or 2567**  
**Fax: (63) (2) 301-2017**  
**Email: ACSInfoManila@state.gov**

### Passports

Mon through Fri 7:30am - 11:00am, by appointment only  
 Information by phone: M-F, 2-4pm x2555  
 For applications: 2Go - 02-528-7136 loc 6

### Citizenship and Birth Registration

By appointment only  
 Information by phone: M-F, 2-4pm x2532  
 For applications: 2Go - 02-528-7136 loc 6

### Notary Services

Mon 1:00pm - 2:45pm  
 Tue through Fri 7:30am - 10:00am, by appointment only

### Legal Capacity to Marry

Mon 1:00pm - 2:45pm  
 Tue through Fri 7:30am - 10:00am, by appointment only

### Emergencies

For emergencies after office hours, please call (63) (2) 301-2000 and ask for the Duty Officer.

### **For further information, visit:**

<http://manila.usembassy.gov>

### STEP Enrollment:

<https://travelregistration.state.gov>

### Cebu Consular Agency

Waterfront Hotel, Lahug, Cebu City  
 Mon through Fri, 9:00am - 11:00am  
 Tel: (63) (32) 231-1261  
 Fax: (63) (32) 231-0174

## 2011 HOLIDAY CALENDAR

HOLIDAY	LEGAL DATE	CLOSING DATE
President's Day (U.S.)	Monday, February 21	Monday, February 21
Bataan & Corregidor / Heroism Day (PHL)	Saturday, April 9	TBD
Maundy Thursday (PHIL)	Thursday, April 21	Thursday, April 21
Good Friday (PHIL)	Friday, April 22	Friday, April 22
Philippine Labor Day (PHIL)	Sunday, May 1	TBD
Memorial Day (U.S.)	Monday, May 30	Monday, May 30
Philippine Independence Day (PHIL)	Sunday, June 12	TBD
U.S. Independence Day (U.S.)	Monday, July 4	Monday, July 4
Ninoy Aquino Day (PHIL)	Sunday, August 21	TBD
National Heroes Day (PHIL)	Tuesday, August 30	TBD
U.S. Labor Day (U.S.)	Monday, September 5	Monday, September 5
Eid-ul-Fitr (subject to proclamation-PHIL)	TBD	TBD
Columbus Day (U.S.)	Monday, October 10	Monday, October 10
All Saint's Day (PHIL)	Tuesday, November 1	Tuesday, November 1
Veterans Day (U.S.)	Friday, November 11	Friday, November 11
Thanksgiving Day (U.S.)	Thursday, November 24	Thursday, November 24
Bonifacio Day (PHIL)	Wednesday, November 30	TBD
Christmas Day (U.S./PHIL)	Sunday, December 25	Monday, December 26
Rizal Day (PHIL)	Friday, December 30	TBD
Last Day of the Year (PHIL)	Saturday, December 30	Saturday, December 30