

# The Consular Post

U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL: AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

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## WELCOME



Dear friends across New Zealand and the South Pacific –

We are delighted to welcome you to this, our first edition of **The Consular Post**, our fledgling newsletter to Americans in our part of the world. We intend for this to be a friendly, lively, and informal way to share important information with you all, and somehow to combine the lightning-fast nature of today's electronic communications, with the great tradition of local newspapers of days past, that were the lifeblood of keeping abreast with the news of our communities as well as of the broader world.

To make this work the way we would like, besides the news we give you, we count on you to share with us as well. "All the news that's fit to print" would be a good watchword, though it seems I've heard that phrase somewhere before.

We'll try to keep you abreast of the most useful information about our services and operations, and give you as much advance notice about changes that are coming. Outreach visits and other events will always be noted. And a human interest item or two should usually be part of the mix. We'll continue with our snap Warden Messages and Public Announcements, but don't want to wear you out with those, and hope you'll look forward to this format even more.

In the meantime, have a great spring, or is it fall? This Illinois boy still gets confused: September means college football and falling leaves, right? No? Well, for sure, October means the World Series, and an Outreach Visit and Town meeting in Christchurch. See you there! And on these pages in the months to come.

Yours faithfully, Nick Greanias, U.S. Consul

## PLEASE HELP US STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOU



The Department of State recently launched an **Online Travel Registration Web Site:**

<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>. As U.S. citizens you can use it to record your foreign travel and residence information. We can use this information to communicate with you, or assist you in an emergency, and we strongly recommend you register yourself and your family. Even if you've already given your information to us at the Consulate, please do re-register online and update your information. The data you provide is completely secure. It is held behind Department of State (DoS) firewalls, accessed only by cleared personnel in Embassies, Consulates, and DoS, and releasable only under provisions of the Privacy Act.

## OUR CONTACT INFO AT U.S. CITIZEN SERVICES

Private Bag 92022  
Auckland 1142

Level 3, Citigroup Building  
23 Customs Street E.  
Auckland 1010

Ph: +64-9-303-2724 extn: 2800  
Fax: +64-9-366-0870  
Email: [aucklandacs@state.gov](mailto:aucklandacs@state.gov)  
Web: <http://newzealand.usembassy.gov>

**EMERGENCY SERVICE** for American citizen emergencies only: Mon – Fri, 7.30am – 4pm call +64-9-303-2724 extn: 2900. Afterhours call +64-4-462-6000 (You will be asked to leave a message for the duty officer to return your call).

**OUR OFFICE HOURS:** We are open for U.S. Citizen Services Monday – Friday 8am – 12noon. We are closed all U.S. and New Zealand public holidays (see the back page) and the last Wednesday of each month.

## CONSUL GENERAL— RANDY BERRY



I'm pleased to welcome you to our inaugural edition of our Consulate General newsletter, and hope that this is a useful vehicle for providing information to the American Citizen community in New Zealand. I am thrilled to find myself now at work in Auckland. I arrived in late July to many friendly "kia oras" and a very welcoming community. It is particularly exciting to join the U.S. Mission to New Zealand at a fascinating time, with significant potential in broadening the ties that bind our two countries and societies together, and I look forward to playing my role in reinforcing established links, and building new ones, as time passes.

Twenty years ago, I saw Auckland for the first time, as a hitch-hiking college student, and getting reacquainted with the city – admittedly from a far different perspective - has been a pleasure. A lot of ground has passed under my feet since then, with U.S. Foreign Service postings in Bangladesh, Egypt, Uganda, and South Africa, in addition to a recently-completed tour in Nepal. Since learning of my impending posting here several months back, I've had plenty of opportunity to re-establish my familiarity with New Zealand. Living in Kathmandu, it was impossible to miss the open adoration demonstrated by so many Nepalis for the late Sir Edmund Hilary, and I came to know many of those among Sir Edmund's "Nepali family" of friends, colleagues, and admirers. That opportunity appears to have been an excellent bridge from that part of the world to this one.

Our Consulate General is staffed by a talented and dedicated group of individuals, and, as many of you are aware, providing services to the locally-resident American community is the primary reason for our presence here. It is a tradition established while the nation of New Zealand was in its infancy (and our own was yet to celebrate its 70<sup>th</sup> Independence Day), when James Reddy Clendon assumed responsibilities as the first U.S. Consul in the Northland. I am so pleased to be the latest in a very long line of Consuls and Consuls General to represent the United States to the people of New Zealand, and to oversee the operations of our Consulate.

Happy reading; I hope you find this newsletter informative. If you have suggestions or comments, we'd love to hear them.

Randy Berry, Consul General

## NEW APPOINTMENT SYSTEM FOR U.S. CITIZEN SERVICES AT THE CONSULATE GENERAL, AUCKLAND

As of **Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010** the Consulate General will be offering an appointment system for American Citizen Services. This system will allow you to schedule your own appointment in a time slot that suits you. The process takes just five minutes!. There will be links to this service posted on our website shortly.

## U.S. CONSULAR OFFICER TO VISIT CHRISTCHURCH REPORT OF BIRTH ABROAD AND PASSPORT INTERVIEWS

Mr. Nicholas J. Greanias, United States Consul, will be available in Christchurch on Tuesday, October 20th, from 9am - 4pm, and Wednesday, October 21st, from 9am - Noon, to accept Passport and Consular Report of Birth Abroad applications from American Citizens who would normally need to apply in person at the Consulate General in Auckland: e.g., minors and first-time passport applications.

If you wish to make an appointment, please telephone the Consulate General in Auckland on: 09 303-2724 ext: 2800, 2842, 2848, 2856, or email us at [aucklandacs@state.gov](mailto:aucklandacs@state.gov).

### WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

**REPORT OF BIRTH OF A U.S. CITIZEN BORN ABROAD** – If you're a U.S. citizen and have had a child born while in New Zealand, then congratulations! – Please contact us for guidance on how to document your child as a U.S. citizen and to make an appointment to submit your application.

**PASSPORTS** – We issue passports to first-time applicants, renew expired passports, and issue passports to citizens whose passports have been lost, stolen or damaged. Please allow us seven days for the processing. We can also add additional visa pages to passports.

*"And so my fellow Americans: Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country."*

President John F. Kennedy,  
1961.

**ARRESTS/IMPRISONMENT** – We endeavor to visit citizens who are imprisoned in New Zealand. We cannot provide legal assistance but can provide guidance and referral to legal professionals.

**HOSPITALIZATION** – Please inform us of any citizens hospitalized in New Zealand. We'll try to visit the patient, and can offer guidance on the New Zealand system. We cannot pay for medical bills incurred while in New Zealand.

**DEATHS** – If a U.S. citizen dies while in New Zealand, please contact us and we will assist as much as possible. The Consulate provides a 'Consular Report of Death of a U.S. Citizen Abroad.' This document will be required to finalize estate matters in the U.S.

**SOCIAL SECURITY** – The Consulate General in Auckland is not a claims-taking Post for Social Security. Our regional district Social Security office is located in Manila, Philippines. Their contact details are:

#### **Social Security Administration Division**

United States Embassy  
1131 Roxas Blvd., Ermita  
0930 Manila, Philippines

**PHONE:** (632) 301-2000 ext. 6319/6302/5085

**FAX:** (632) 522-1514

**E-MAIL:** [FBU.Manila@ssa.gov](mailto:FBU.Manila@ssa.gov)

**WEBSITE:** [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

If you have difficulty contacting the Manila office, please contact us and we will assist you if we can.

**VETERAN AFFAIRS** – As with Social Security, we don't have a Veteran Affairs representative in Auckland. Many VA enquiries can be answered on [the VA website](#). If you can't find the information you need, please contact us and we'll do what we can to assist.

**INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE** – The IRS has created a [new comprehensive tax page](#) designed to help U.S. citizens living abroad. It has basic tax information that Americans overseas need to know, and also links to information on more specific topics such as the foreign earned income exclusion, foreign tax credit, reporting foreign bank accounts, Fulbright grants, state taxes, and a myriad of others. It also has information on contacting the IRS for more assistance, and forms and publications downloads.

**VOTING** – The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) recommends that all citizens submit a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to their local election official in January of each year. A FPCA will register and confirm your registration, will act as a request for absentee ballots for any elections to be held that year, and will give your local election official your current mailing address. To register to vote, send an e-mail with your name, address and state of last residence to [aucklandacs@state.gov](mailto:aucklandacs@state.gov) and we'll send the papers you need. You can also download the FPCA card from the [FVAP website](#).

### CONSULAR OUTREACH VISITS

The American Citizen Services section conducts visits to Wellington and Christchurch to provide Passport and Birth Abroad Registration that cannot be performed through the mail. Subject to workload, demand, and funding we try to visit Christchurch and Wellington twice a year each. While we are committed to trying to provide this service, various constraints may delay or restrict these visits.

## TRAVELLING FOR CHRISTMAS?

**PASSPORT RENEWAL : THE FIRST STEP TO PLANNING YOUR CHRISTMAS VACATION**

Christmas is just around the corner. It's one of the most popular times for travel, whether you're planning to return to the U.S. to be with family, or exploring Australia and the South Pacific. Before you book your tickets, check the expiry dates on your family's passports. Renewing passports early can save you both time and money. Remember, all American Citizens must enter and exit the U.S. on a valid United States passport, irrespective of any other passports you might hold. For more information on passport renewal for adults and children please visit our website: <http://newzealand.usembassy.gov/passports.html>

**MOVING BACK TO THE U.S. AND NEED TO FILE FOR YOUR SPOUSE TO ACCOMPANY YOU?**

As a U.S. citizen, you need to file an I-130 Petition for an Immigrant Visa for your spouse. You can file it with us only if you live in New Zealand or the rest of the Auckland Consular District, and have been here for at least 6 months (and not just on tourist visas). You can get the initial forms and instructions to start the immigrant visa process by calling 0900 87 847 (a pay service). Your non-citizen spouse can start the process by mail if you are outside Auckland. However, eventually the I-130 petition must be filed in person by you—it **cannot** be filed by mail. You can file at the Consulate General on weekdays between 8-9 am.

**UPDATE FOR NON-U.S. CITIZENS ENTERING THE U.S.**

If you're a New Zealand citizen, you can most likely travel to the U.S. for up to 90 days using the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), which lets you travel to the U.S. without a visa. But you do need authorization for travel from the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) to travel under the VWP.



Making an ESTA application is easy; just log onto the ESTA web site and answer a few simple questions to confirm that you're eligible for VWP travel. In the first few months of ESTA, 200,000 travelers had sought electronic travel authorization and 99.6% of them were approved – almost all in under one minute. This is a free service. On the web, if you enter a site that wants to charge you for this, it is not a U.S. government site; don't use it!

You can use ESTA any time before your trip. Your ESTA approval will be valid for two years or until your passport expires (whichever comes first), and is good for multiple entries into the U.S.

As usual, it's always best to register with ESTA as soon as you start planning any U.S. bound travel, and ideally not less than 10 days before travelling. Over

99.5% of applications are approved but if yours isn't, you'll need to come to Auckland for a non-immigrant visa. So allow plenty of time! <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/>

*"Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."*

— Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1933, in the midst of the Great Depression.

**\*2009 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AND CLOSURES**

The Consulate General observes all U.S. and New Zealand public holidays. We're also closed the last Wednesday of each month. These are the public holidays remaining in 2009 on which we'll be closed.

Mon, Oct 26	N.Z. Labour Day	Wed, Nov 11	Veterans Day
Thu, Nov 26	Thanksgiving Day	Fri, Dec 25	Christmas Day
Mon, Dec 28	Boxing Day	Fri, Jan 01	New Year's Day
Mon, Jan 4	N.Z. New Year's Day	Mon, Jan 18	Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday