

Danesfort Dispatches

A Quarterly Newsletter from the U.S. Consulate General Belfast

August 2010



Vol. 5, Issue 3

Dear American Community,

Well, we are in the dog days of summer but somehow it isn't hot enough in Belfast for that description, especially when we are all hearing from family and friends in the U.S. about how hot it is.

The Consulate had a busy spring. Economic Envoy Declan Kelly visited several times. In May, he spoke in front of several hundred at Belfast City Hall for then Lord Mayor Naomi Long's last official event. He spoke later the same evening at a joint North-South Institute of Directors (IOD) annual dinner. Both speeches inspired many to think about Northern Ireland's comparative advantages for attracting inward investment and private sector growth. In June, Declan returned to Belfast for the formal announcement of the U.S.-NI Mentorship Program with First Minister Peter Robinson, deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, and American Ireland Fund (AIF) chair Loretta Brennan Glucksman. The Program will send approximately two dozen young graduates and professionals this fall to the U.S. for a one year work placement with a U.S. corporation.

We were very happy to celebrate the USA's Under 20 Team's 3-0 victory against host Northern Ireland in the Milk Cup on July 30 in Ballymena. We are also looking forward to tonight's Belfast 2010 International Basketball Classic where the Pittsburgh Panthers will play the Melbourne Tigers at the Odyssey Arena. See page 4 of this Newsletter for more details.

On the cultural front, the Consulate is looking forward to the 19th Appalachian & Bluegrass Music Festival during the first weekend of September at the Ulster American Folk Part in Omagh. This internationally-renowned Festival is packed with performances from some of the biggest artists in bluegrass and is well worth attending. Our friends at the Folk Part are also working on a new Thanksgiving event for November. We'll keep you posted.

All of us at the Consulate hope that you and your family are having a wonderful and relaxing summer.

Kamala Lakhdir, Consul General

Consular Fees Increase: Effective July 13, 2010

The Department of State has announced new consular services fees effective **July 13, 2010**. **Fee changes are as follows:**

- The fee for a first-time passport book or a replacement for a lost/stolen/damaged passport book for an adult is \$135.
- The fee for an adult passport book renewal is \$110.
- The fee for a minor passport book (age 16 and under is \$105 .
- The fee for a Consular Report of Birth Abroad of a Citizen of the United States is \$100.
- The fee for adding extra pages is \$82.00.

- The fee for notary services is \$50.00 per signature.

For further information, visit the Department of State website at <http://travel.state.gov> .

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Travel Alert - Hurricane Season 2010



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GENERAL BELFAST

DANESFORT
HOUSE

223 STRANMILLIS
ROAD

BELFAST BT9 5GR

PHONE:
028 9038 6100
American Citizen
Services - ext. 4104

FAX: 028 9068 1301

Email:
Consularbelfast@state.gov

Website:
<http://london.usembassy.gov>



The Department of State alerts U.S. citizens to the Hurricane Season in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the Caribbean, and the Gulf of Mexico. The official Atlantic Hurricane Season runs from June through November.

National Weather Service officials at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predict a 70 percent probability of the following ranges: fourteen to twenty-three named storms, with eight to fourteen becoming hurricanes, and three to seven becoming major hurricanes. NOAA recommends that those in hurricane-prone regions begin preparations for the upcoming season now.

In the aftermath of some previous storms, U.S. citizens traveling abroad have encountered uncomfortable and often dangerous conditions that have lasted for several days while awaiting transportation back to the United States. In the past, many U.S. citizens have been forced to delay travel due to infrastructure damage to airports and limited flight availability. Roads were also washed out or obstructed by debris, adversely affecting access to airports and land routes out of affected areas. Reports of looting and sporadic violence in the aftermath of natural disasters are not uncommon. Security personnel may not be readily available to assist at all times. Should a situation require an evacuation from an overseas location, the State Department will work with commercial airlines to ensure that U.S. citizens are repatriated as safely and efficiently as possible. Commercial airlines are the Department's primary source of transportation in an evacuation; other means of transport are utilized only as a last resort. The Department of State will not provide no-cost transportation, but does have the authority to provide repatriation loans to those in financial need. **U.S. citizens should obtain travel insurance to cover unexpected expenses during an emergency.**

U.S. citizens living in or traveling to storm-prone regions overseas can prepare for hurricanes and tropical storms by organizing a kit in a waterproof container that includes a supply of bottled water, non-perishable food items, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, and vital documents (especially passport and other identification). Emergency shelters often provide only very basic resources and may have limited medical and food supplies. U.S. citizens should monitor local radio, local media, and the National Weather Service to stay aware of area weather developments. Minor tropical storms can develop into hurricanes very quickly, limiting the time available for a safe evacuation. Travelers should apprise family and friends of their whereabouts and remain in close contact with their tour operators, hotel staff, and local officials for evacuation instructions in a weather emergency.

U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate through the Department of State's travel registration website. By registering, American citizens can receive the Embassy's most recent security and safety updates during their trip. Registration also ensures that U.S. citizens can be reached should an emergency arise either abroad or at home. While consular officers will do their utmost to assist U.S. citizens in a crisis, travelers always should be aware that local authorities bear primary responsibility for the welfare of people living or traveling in their jurisdictions.

Additional information on hurricanes and storm preparedness may be found on the Bureau of Consular Affairs' Hurricane Season 2010 webpage at http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_3795.html. Click on "Hurricane Season - Know Before You Go" link. Updated information on travel in the Caribbean may be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-888-407-4747 within the United States and Canada or, from outside the United States and Canada, 1-202-501-4444. Travelers to the region are encouraged to check the Internet site of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate with consular responsibilities for the territory they will be visiting. For further information please consult the Country Specific Information Sheet for the country or territory.

Travel Alert - Pacific Typhoon Season 2010



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U.S. citizens residing in or traveling to East Asia and the West and Central Pacific region should be alert to the ongoing threat of typhoons originating in the West and Central Pacific region. Typhoons in this area of the Pacific may occur year round; however, historically, the most active months are June through November. U.S. citizens in the region should monitor local weather reports and take appropriate action as needed.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Central Pacific Hurricane Center (CPHC) predicts a 70 percent chance that activity during the 2010 Typhoon Season will be below normal in the Central Pacific basin. Each season the West and Central Pacific region experiences 31 typhoons on average about half of which have the potential to cause severe destruction. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration recommends that those in typhoon-prone regions be prepared.



In the past, many U.S. citizens traveling abroad in this area during typhoon season were forced to delay their travel or return to the United States because of infrastructure damage to airports and limited flight availability. In many cases, flights were suspended, and passengers faced long delays due to the need to repair a damaged airport. Roads were also washed out or obstructed by debris, adversely affecting access to airports and land routes out of affected areas. In the event of a typhoon, you should be aware that you may not be able to depart an affected area for 24 to 48 hours or more.

Be sure to monitor local media to stay aware of weather developments. For further information on typhoon warnings in the West and Central Pacific region, please consult the Joint Typhoon Warning Center in Honolulu at

<http://www.usno.navy.mil/JTWC> and the National Weather Service's Central Pacific Hurricane Center, <http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/cphc>, as well as Fiji's regional meteorological center responsible for cyclone warnings in the South Pacific region at <http://www.met.gov.fj>.

We encourage all U.S. citizens abroad to register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate through the Department of State's travel registration website. By registering, you can receive the nearest embassy's or consulate's most recent security and safety updates during your trip. Information on cyclones and storm preparedness may be found on the Typhoon Season page of the Bureau of Consular Affairs' Hurricane Preparedness website. Updated information on travel in typhoon-prone regions may be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-888-407-4747 within the United States and Canada, or from other areas, 1-202-501-4444.

Passport Validity : Some Countries Require Six Months

When you are living abroad it is important that every member of your family has a current, valid passport.

Some countries require that your passport have at least six months validity remaining from your date of departure. You should make sure that your passport has at least six months validity before you make any travel arrangements. For passport renewal information, see our website at <http://www.usembassy.org.uk/nireland/nipass.html>.

For Department of State Country Specific Information Sheets, go to <http://travel.state.gov>. Select the Country Information from the drop-down menu on the left-hand side of the page.

New Appointment System for American Citizen Services



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The American Citizen Services Unit at the U.S. Consulate General Belfast is introducing an online appointment booking system for certain American Citizen Services. Effective July 14, 2010, all Passport, Consular Report of Birth Abroad, and Notary services appointments must be booked online on our website at <http://www.usembassy.org.uk/nireland/index.html>. On-line appointment booking systems for American Citizen Services are in wide use throughout Europe and have proven very popular with Americans because they allow Consular Sections to provide better service to their citizens.

We are implementing this system to better serve the American citizen community in Northern Ireland and we believe it will reduce wait times and ensure that your visit to the U.S. Consulate is more efficient and pleasant.

Appointments for routine, non-emergency passport services, reports of birth abroad, extra passport pages and notary services can all be made online free of charge.



U.S. Sports Teams Visit Northern Ireland

BELFAST 2010 INTERNATIONAL BASKETBALL CLASSIC

The Odyssey Arena will be the venue for one of the top International Basketball tournaments of the year, when the Pittsburgh Panthers, take on the Melbourne Tigers on Friday 6th August 2010. These top teams from the USA & Australia will be joined by Scottish & English National teams for the first ever Belfast International Basketball Classic hosted by USNI Sport in the arena on **Friday 6th and Saturday 7th August 2010**. USNI Sport, in association with Sport NI, Belfast City Council, The Odyssey Arena and the Hastings Hotel Group, have put together an Elite Basketball Tournament featuring NCAA USA powerhouse, Pittsburgh University Panthers, Australian NBL top team, the Melbourne Tigers and rounding out the foursome, are both the English and Scottish National teams. This tournament should prove to be a great pre-season test for both the Tigers and the Panthers as they hope to commence their respective seasons in October in top form. It will also be ideal preparation for National Team programs in both England and Scotland over the summer months. For more information visit www.belfastbasketballclassic.com

TICKETS RELEASED FOR BELFAST ICE BATTLE AS GIANTS TAKE ON WORLD FAMOUS BOSTON BRUINS

Northern Ireland's hottest ice hockey tickets of the decade have gone on sale following the news that the world famous Boston Bruins will travel to Belfast in October to play their first ever game outside of North America, against the Belfast Giants at the Odyssey Arena. The announcement was made by Minister Arlene Foster on behalf of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board which has provided support and sponsorship for the much anticipated game. The game, which is also being sponsored by Belfast City Council, will mark the ten year anniversary of the Odyssey since it opened in 2000 and began hosting the Belfast Giants. The Boston Bruins are one of the most famous hockey teams in the National Hockey League (NHL) and the securing of the game in Belfast is expected to attract over 4,500 out of state visitors and generate over £800,000 into the local economy, as ice hockey fans across the UK and America travel to witness the Bruins' inaugural European game. Tickets are on sale from Ticketmaster on 0870 2434455, or the Odyssey Box Office on 028 9073 9074. Ticket prices range from £40. For more information or to book online visit www.belfastgiants.com or www.ticketmaster.ie.

Federal Voters Assistance Program (FVAP)

The following States will hold Primary Elections during the months of August, and September 2010 on the dates indicated.

2010 Statewide and Congressional Elections:

August - Kansas - August 3, Michigan - August 3, Missouri - August 3
Tennessee - August 5, Colorado - August 10, Connecticut - August 10
Washington - August 17, Wyoming - August 17, Alaska - August 24
Arizona - August 24, Florida - August 24
Louisiana Congressional - August 28 (*Runoff October 2 if necessary*)

September - Guam - September 4, Virgin Islands - September 11, Delaware - September 14
District of Columbia - September 14, Maryland - September 14
Massachusetts - September 14, Minnesota - September 14
New Hampshire - September 14, New York - September 14
Rhode Island - September 14, Vermont - September 14
Wisconsin - September 14, Hawaii - September 18

Register and Request Your Ballot!

All members of the U.S. Uniformed Services, their family members and citizens residing outside the U.S. who are residents from these States and have not yet submitted a registration and ballot request (FPCA) for the 2010 calendar year, should do so as soon as possible.

The FPCA ballot application and instructions for the above States are available at www.fvap.gov/FPCA. Click on your State on the map and follow the instructions to register and request an absentee ballot. Some States allow submitting the FPCA by fax or email in addition to regular mail. Send your FPCA NOW to your election office to ensure you have enough time to receive, vote, and return the ballot! For more information, visit FVAP at: www.fvap.gov.

Travel.state.gov Website Re-Launches With New Look!

On May 25, 2010, the State Department re-launched the travel.state.gov site in an effort to continually improve the availability of consular information to the public. The first phase of the redesign focuses on making the look and feel of the site more closely resemble that of www.state.gov while cleaning up some of the site's navigation tools.

Travel.state.gov is the State Department's main source of information for you to learn about the travel safety situation in other countries, and to [let us know your travel plans](#) so that consular officers in our embassies and consulates around the world can serve you and your loved ones better when you're abroad.

The site is particularly useful for people traveling or living abroad during times of crises because it serves as the official source of information for U.S. citizens during [emergency situations abroad](#). For example, during the recent earthquake in Haiti, thousands of American citizens visited the website for information on how to report loved ones missing in Haiti or to check on their status, and for guidance on the evacuation process or other safety and security issues.

[Travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) received over 370 million visits last year, and we expect even more this year. Please visit travel.state.gov and let us know what you think of the site by taking the customer satisfaction survey. We are always seeking ways to improve travel.state.gov and will be making more changes to the site throughout the year, so we welcome your feedback!



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Culture Corner

The U.S. Consulate General occasionally provides partial grants for cultural events which have an American element. Some of the events are free, for others there is a charge. This quarter, we encourage you to check out:

Belfast Taste & Music Festival - *August 5-8, 2010* - Botanic Gardens, Belfast - Four glorious days of great food, live entertainment and dancing..all arranged to celebrate Northern Ireland and Chicago chefs 'cooking up a storm' with great local food.

International Basketball Tournament - *August 6-7, 2010* - Odyssey Arena - The Odyssey Arena will be the venue for one of the top International Basketball Tournaments of the year, when the Pittsburgh Panthers take on the Melbourne Tigers. For more information visit <http://www.belfastbasketballclassic.com>.

Belfast City Blues Festival - *August 27-29, 2010* - Great music, great vibes! Visit the website for more details: <http://www.belfastcityblues.com>.

Ulster American Folk Park Bluegrass Festival - *September 3-5, 2010* - The best folk festival around comes to the Ulster American Folk Park in September. Visit <http://www.nmni.com/uafp/What-s-on/Events/18th-Annual-Appalachian---Bluegrass-Music-Festival> for all the details, times and entertainers!

Disclaimer: This listing of events, performances and other activities is for information purposes only and does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Consulate General Belfast. All opinions expressed by the artists, writers, and performers participating or contributing to the events listed are those solely of the participants and contributors and not the U.S. Government or its designated representatives. Listing information is believed to be correct at the time it is listed but the U.S. Consulate General accepts no liability for subsequent changes to these details and no reliance should be placed upon them.

American Citizen Services: In the event of a genuine emergency involving a U.S. Citizen in Northern Ireland, our after-hours phone number is 07545-507738.

Consular Closure Dates

The U.S. Consulate General Belfast will be closed on the following dates:

Monday, August 30, 2010 - Summer Bank Holiday

Monday, September 6, 2010 - Labor Day



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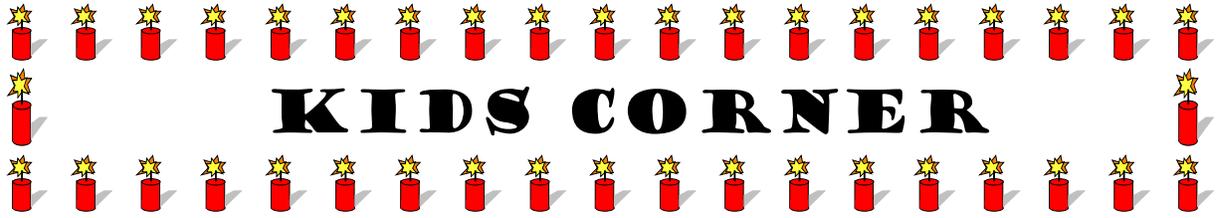
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Y S N O I N U Y D O U D E S
A E R V E A B R Y A E A K H
D S C A M P I N G A Y H W R
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E N M O H J V V T O V E W R
F L L H K J L H F R M S B M

Help find these Labor Day –related words!

Barbeque
Long Weekend
Picnics

Camping
Monday
Unions

Day Off
Parties