

# Danesfort Dispatches

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

July 2012



Vol. 7, Issue 3

Dear American Community,

Happy Fourth of July! This is my first newsletter as your new Consul General here in Northern Ireland. My wife Nana Lee Felding and I are looking forward to three exciting years here. It's the start of the vacation season, although the weather isn't always cooperating, but we plan to enjoy the summer. Make sure you can enjoy it as well by checking to see if your passport is due for renewal. Please allow enough time – usually three weeks – to get a new passport. And remember that all U.S. citizens, even minor children, require a U.S. passport to enter or leave the U.S.

Like everyone else I am watching with interest the upcoming presidential elections. We expect a lot of lively discussion and debate during the next few months. Make sure you are registered to vote so you can have a hand in directing the future of your country. Forms to register and information are available at: [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov). We've also provided a bit more information on page 2 of the newsletter.

This has been a busy year with big events such as the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. Are you ready for the Olympics and the Paralympics? It's a great opportunity to cheer on your fellow countrymen. Go Team U.S.A.!

I hope to meet many of you in the coming three years.

Enjoy the summer!

Gregory S. Burton  
Consul General

## London 2012 Olympics Fast Approaching!

Are you or your family traveling over to London for the Games? Do you have friends or family coming to England to catch some of the events? Stay informed and in touch during your visit. Information for American Citizens visiting the United Kingdom during the Games is available by [clicking on this link](#). The top-ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are answered in [this Youtube video](#).

Embassy London's American Citizen Services (ACS) provide a variety of emergency and non-emergency services to Americans in England and Wales, including [Passport Services](#). Please [click here for further information](#).

ALSO - Stay informed on what the Embassy has to say about London 2012. They'll have practical information on getting around and staying safe and of course they'll cover Olympic stories of success and failure on our [London 2012 blog](#).

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Entry Into the United States	2
Hurricane Season	3
Tax Filing Information	4
Ulster American Women's Club	4
Culture Corner	5
Kids Corner	6

## U.S. Passports for Entry into the United States - FAQs

---



### Danesfort Dispatches

Department of State

U.S. CONSULATE  
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](mailto:Consularbelfast@state.gov)

Website:

<http://london.usembassy.gov>



**Q. Can I hold more than one passport or nationality?** Yes. In the 1980's, the Supreme Court ruled that citizenship is a constitutional right that cannot be taken away from a citizen who does not intend to relinquish it. Therefore, such actions as naturalization in a foreign country, employment with a foreign government, and/or voting in a foreign election do not automatically jeopardize American citizenship. However, please note that all U.S. citizens, even dual nationals, must enter and depart the United States on U.S. passports. See more information on the State Department [Advice about Possible Loss of U.S. Citizenship and Dual Nationality](#) website.

**Q. I am an American citizen, but also have a foreign passport. Can I use my foreign passport to travel to the United States?** No. Under U.S. law, U.S. citizens must be in possession of a valid U.S. passport to enter or leave the United States. This is true even if you hold a passport from another country. If your U.S. passport has been lost or stolen, or if it has expired, you must apply to replace it before traveling to the United States. For passport renewal information go to [www.london.usembassy.gov/](http://www.london.usembassy.gov/).

## Fourth of July Voting Reminder

---

**Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July!** U.S. citizens around the globe will soon mark the 236<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Nation's Independence Day with family and community gatherings, food, and fireworks. For U.S. citizens living outside the United States, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July is an opportunity for all of us, regardless of political affiliation, to celebrate our shared values as citizens of the United States of America

**Have a say in our country's future.** One of our most treasured values is the right and the privilege to vote – to participate actively in our country's democratic process. This November, U.S. citizens will elect a President, a Vice President, one-third of the Senate, and the entire House of Representatives. The U.S. Consulate General Belfast in Northern Ireland encourages all U.S. citizens to participate in this year's elections, and stands ready to help you vote.

**Almost all overseas U.S. citizens can vote.** Twenty-two states and the District of Columbia now allow adult children who have never resided in the United States to vote using their parents' state of voting residence. Details are available on the FVAP website at <http://www.fvap.gov/reference/nvr-res.html>.

**Register and request a ballot.** To vote, new laws require you to complete and submit a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) this calendar year. The FPCA allows you to register to vote and request an absentee ballot. If you haven't yet done so, we urge you to do so now. The easiest way to complete it is online at [www.FVAP.gov](http://www.FVAP.gov). Depending on your State's rules, you then send it to your local election officials electronically or by mail.

**Mailing guidance.** Print out the completed FPCA and the (U.S.) postage-paid envelope containing the address of your local election officials. You can mail it back home using Royal Mail international postage. Be sure to affix sufficient international postage and allow sufficient time for international mail delivery.

**Need help?** Feel free to contact American Citizen Services at the U.S. Consulate General Belfast. You can telephone our office at 02890 386104 during normal working hours. You can also email the Consulate at [consularbelfast@state.gov](mailto:consularbelfast@state.gov). We will try to respond to your email with 24 hours.

**Make your vote count!** Follow your State's absentee voting procedures carefully. Send in your FPCA before the registration deadline. When you get your ballot, vote and mail it promptly so it reaches local election officials by your State's absentee ballot receipt deadline.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION:** New absentee voting laws are in effect for the 2012 elections. You may no longer automatically receive ballots based on a previous absentee ballot request. All U.S. citizens outside the United States who want to vote by absentee ballot in U.S. elections should complete a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) every year.



## Spotlight: Hurricane & Typhoon Season 2012

---

The Department of State alerts U.S. citizens to the hurricane and typhoon seasons in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the Caribbean, and the Gulf of Mexico. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recommends that those in hurricane- and typhoon-prone regions begin preparations for the upcoming seasons now. This Travel Alert expires on December 1, 2012.

**The Atlantic Basin, including the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico:** Hurricane season begins June 1 and ends November 30. NOAA's Climate Prediction Center expects to see a near-normal hurricane season in the Atlantic Basin this year with a 70 percent chance of nine to fifteen named storms, including four to eight that will reach hurricane strength (with top winds of 74 mph or higher). Of those, one to three will become major hurricanes (with top winds of 111 mph or higher, ranking Category 3, 4, or 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale).

**The Eastern Pacific:** Hurricane season began May 15 and ends November 30. NOAA predicts a near-normal hurricane season in the Eastern Pacific this year with a 70 percent chance of 12 to 18 named storms, including five to nine that will reach hurricane strength. Of those, two to five are expected to become major hurricanes (Category 3, 4, or 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale).

**Western and Central Pacific:** Typhoon season begins June 1 and ends November 30. NOAA's Central Pacific Hurricane Center (CPHC) predicts a 50 percent chance that activity during the 2012 season will be below normal in the Central Pacific basin. Each season the West and Central Pacific region averages 31 typhoons, about half of which have the potential to cause severe destruction. For information on typhoon warnings, please consult the Joint Typhoon Warning Center in Honolulu, the National Weather Service's Central Pacific Hurricane Center, and the Regional Specialized Meteorological Center (RSMC) Tokyo - Typhoon Center.

In the aftermath of some previous storms, U.S. citizens traveling abroad encountered uncomfortable and often dangerous conditions that lasted for several days while they waited for transportation back to the United States. In the past, many U.S. citizens were 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. In many places, storms often are accompanied by damaging high tides and flooding. If you are living close to the ocean or other bodies of water, you may be at higher risk of flooding. Landslides and mudslides also are serious concerns during heavy rains. Reports of looting and sporadic violence in the aftermath of natural disasters are not uncommon. Security personnel may not be readily available to assist. In the event of a storm, travelers should be aware that they may not be able to depart the affected area for 24-48 hours or longer.

If a situation requires an evacuation from an overseas location, the Department of State 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 does not provide no-cost transportation, but has the authority to provide repatriation loans to those in financial need. We recommend that you obtain travel insurance to cover unexpected expenses during an emergency.

If you live in or are traveling to storm-prone regions, prepare for hurricanes, typhoons, and other 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 your passport and other identification). Emergency shelters often provide only very basic resources and may have limited medical and food supplies.

Monitor local radio and other media, and the National Weather Service to be aware of weather developments. Minor tropical storms can develop into hurricanes or typhoons very quickly, limiting the time available for a safe evacuation. Inform family and friends of your whereabouts and remain in close contact with your tour operator, hotel staff, transportation providers (airlines, cruise lines, etc.), and local officials for evacuation instructions during a weather emergency.



*(Continued on page 4)*

## Tax Forms for 2012



### Danesfort Dispatches

Department of  
State

U.S. CONSULATE  
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](mailto:Consularbelfast@state.gov)

Website:

<http://london.usembassy.gov>



The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) would like to bring to the attention of U.S. citizens abroad a new information reporting form that taxpayers will use starting this tax filing season to report specified foreign financial assets for tax year 2011.



The Form 8938 (Statement of Specified Foreign Financial Assets) should be filed by taxpayers with specific types and amounts of foreign financial assets or foreign accounts. It is important for taxpayers to determine whether they are subject to this new requirement because the law imposes significant penalties for failing to comply.

Form 8938, the instructions, regulations implementing this new foreign asset report, and other information to help taxpayers determine if they are required to file Form 8938 is available on the web at: <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/corporations/article/0,,id=236667,00.html> . You can also find information on Embassy London's IRS site at [london.usembassy.gov/cons](http://london.usembassy.gov/cons).

## Ulster American Women's Club Events

### Announcement from the Ulster American Women's Club:

The Ulster American Women's Club would like to invite all American ladies living in Northern Ireland to join us for monthly events and/or outings in which we meet for coffee, meals, or day trips together. Please contact Jenni at [jennikruithof@hotmail.com](mailto:jennikruithof@hotmail.com) if you are interested in being included on our mailing list and receiving notification of upcoming events.

## ESTA for non-U.S. Passport Holders

Do you have friends, family members, neighbors, or colleagues, who hold a British or Irish passport or a passport from one of the other 30 VWP countries, and who may be traveling to the U.S this summer? Please be sure they know about the ESTA travel requirement. For more information and to register with ESTA, go to <http://london.usembassy.gov> , see the ESTA box on the right hand side of the screen.

## Hurricane Season 2012

*(Continued from page 3)*

We strongly encourage U.S. citizens to enroll with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate through the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) website. By enrolling, you will receive the Embassy's most recent security and safety updates during your trip. Enrollment also ensures that you can be reached during an emergency. While we will do our utmost to assist you in a crisis, 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 can be found on the Department's "[Hurricane Season - Know Before You Go](#)" webpage. You can get updated information on travel to your destination 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. We also encourage you to check the Country Specific Information Sheet and the Internet site of the U.S. embassy or consulate with consular responsibilities for the country you will be visiting. Follow us on Twitter and become a fan of the Bureau of Consular Affairs' page on Facebook as well.

## 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:

**Clipper Yacht Race Homecoming - Derry, Northern Ireland** - July 5-8, 2012 - UK's City of Culture 2013, Derry ~ Londonderry is set to become part of the Clipper 11-12 Round the World Yacht Race with an official city boat in the race. Derry will be an official host port, welcoming the ten-strong fleet in July 2012 with a showcase festival at the end of the final transatlantic stage of the 40,000-mile race en route to the race finish. It will be the first time that Northern Ireland has been represented in the race which attracts a global audience of more than 460 million people. For details visit <http://www.derrycity.gov.uk/clipper>.

**Groomsport Music & Fireworks** - Groomsport Harbour - July 7, 2012 - A little bit of American in North Down. Come enjoy the music and great fireworks show. Go to [www.northdowntourism.gov.uk](http://www.northdowntourism.gov.uk) for details.

**Appalachian Bluegrass Music Festival** - Ulster American Folk Park - August 31 - September 2, 2012 - The 21st Annual Appalachian & Bluegrass Music Festival promises to be a great weekend and music and culture. For booking details and the musical line up, go to <http://www.nmni.com/uafp/What-s-on/Events/-bluegrass>.

**Titanic Proms - Belfast City Hall** - September 8, 2012 - Choirs and songs of Belfast will be a unique, cross-community choral project which celebrates the rich heritage of song and music in the city and from across Northern Ireland. Find out more from [www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk).

**Disclaimer:** Listing of events and performances is for information purposes only and does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Consulate 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. Information is believed to be correct at the time it is listed but the U.S. Consulate 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:

- Wednesday, July 4, 2012 - Independence Day
- Thursday, July 12, 2012 - Orangeman's Day
- Friday, July 13, 2012 - Orangeman's Day
- Monday, August 27, 2012 - Summer Bank Holiday
- Monday, September 2, 2012 - Labor Day



### Danesfort Dispatches

Department of  
State

U.S. CONSULATE  
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](mailto:Consularbelfast@state.gov)

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



# *KID'S CORNER*

## *SUMMERTIME COLORING FUN*

