

Danesfort Dispatches

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

October 2012



Vol. 7, Issue 4

Dear American Community,

In this final Danesfort Dispatch of 2012, I am very pleased to welcome two new American officers, Gabrielle Moseley and Prashant Hemady, to the Consulate staff. Their arrival brings the American staff to its full complement for the first time in a year. You can read more about Gabrielle and Prashant on page two.

The final quarter of the year brings the autumn and the onset of winter with the traditional American holidays including Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and, of course, Christmas, as well as Hanukkah and Kwanza. There is extra excitement this year, however, as the calendar also features Election Day on November 6. The two debates between President Obama and former Governor Romney have garnered the attention of almost everyone I speak with here in Northern Ireland. I realize in these conversations just how closely people here are following the strategies, tactics, and even the foibles of each campaign. The people I talk with are also following the key developments in the races for seats in the Senate and the House of Representatives. Some have even told me how they wish they could vote. This latter point reminds me that we all are sometimes guilty of thinking of our voting franchise as a chore instead of the duty and privilege that it represents. I hope that all of us will take the time to cast our ballots in this important election.

Please have a look in this edition of the Danesfort Dispatch at the information about absentee voting and even a mock Presidential debate at the QUB student union. You will also find items about Social Security, the Diversity Visa Lottery, the SMART Traveler Enrollment Program, and other important announcements.

Sincerely,

Greg Burton,

Consul General

November 2012: Election Day Arrives

The magic day, Tuesday, November 6, 2012, is just around the corner. Are you registered? Have you received your absentee ballot?

will not invalidate your vote or result in two votes being cast.

If you followed all the right steps but still haven't received your ballot 30 days before the election, you should complete and submit a Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB). Visit the Federal Voters Assistance Program website (<http://www.fvap.gov>) to complete the FWAB using their online wizard. Write in the candidates of your choice, and send it to your local election official. If your regular absentee ballot arrives later, fill it out and send it back too. Your FWAB will be counted only if your regular ballot doesn't reach your local election officials by your state's deadline. Following this procedure

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

New Staff at the U.S. Consulate	2
Spotlight: Diversity Visa Lottery	3
ACS FAQ's	4
Ulster American Woman's Club	4
Culture Corner	5
Kids Corner	6

New Staff at the U.S. Consulate General Belfast



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This fall brings with it some staff changes at the Consulate. In addition to Consul General Gregory Burton, who arrived in June, two new Officers have also joined the Belfast team:

Gabrielle H. Moseley is Counselor for Political and Economic Affairs. Prior to her arrival in Belfast, Gabrielle served as First Secretary, Economic Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq from July 2011 to July 2012. She previously served in Washington, DC in the State Department's Economic and Business Affairs Bureau and its Operations Center; as Second Secretary, Economic Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Brasilia, Brazil; and as Vice Consul in San Salvador, El Salvador. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Gabrielle worked for a variety of private sector companies, not-for-profit institutions, and in academia. She has an MA in International Commerce and Policy from George Mason University in Virginia; a graduate certificate in international trade from Oxford University, UK; and earned a BA in International Studies from Trinity University in Washington, DC.

Prashant Hemady is the Management Officer at the U.S. Consulate General Belfast. He previously served as a General Services Officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Chennai and a Vice Consul in the U.S. Embassy Beijing. Prior to joining the United States Foreign Service, Prashant worked in finance at D. E. Shaw and in operations management at J. Crew, both in New York. Prashant has an MBA from the Wharton School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and a BA from Hamilton College in Clinton, New York.

Social Security Numbers

The Social Security number (SSN) was created to keep an accurate record of each person's Social Security earnings. This is important since benefit payments are based on a person's earnings over their lifetime. There are about one billion possible SSN combinations. Over 466 million numbers have been assigned since 1936. Approximately 111 million SSNs will never be assigned. These are deemed unusable due to various reasons, such as they contain the numbers 666.

There are approximately 420 million unassigned SSNs and the current system will provide enough new numbers for several generations into the future. The Social Security card is not an identification document; it serves only as an official verification of the SSN assigned by the Social Security Administration to the person whose name is on the card. The SSN consists of nine digits.

There are three types of Social Security cards. The card most people have shows only their name and SSN. It is issued to U.S. citizens and non-citizens lawfully admitted for permanent residence to the U.S.

Cards with the legend, "NOT VALID FOR EMPLOYMENT" are issued to non-citizens without Department of Homeland Security (DHS) work authorization who are entitled to certain federally financed benefits (such as Social Security benefits), or if they are legally in the U.S. and are entitled to a State benefit that requires them to have an SSN to receive the benefit.

Cards with the legend, "VALID FOR WORK ONLY WITH DHS AUTHORIZATION" are issued to non-citizens lawfully admitted to the U.S. with temporary DHS authorization to work.

There is never a charge for a new or replacement Social Security card or Social Security number or to change your name with Social Security.

For further information, visit the Federal Benefits Unit, Embassy London website at <http://london.usembassy.gov>, or contact by telephone at 0207 499 9000, ext 2926 or 2927. Phone service is available Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 1:00 pm.



Spotlight: Diversity Visa Lottery 2014 (E-DV 2014)

DV 2014 Program: Online registration for the DV-2014 Program will begin on Tuesday, October 2, 2012 at 12:00 noon, Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) (GMT-4), and conclude on Saturday, November 3, 2012 at 12:00 noon, Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) (GMT-4). See the [Diversity Visa Program Instructions webpage for the DV 2014 Instructions](#).

The E-DV system will be open for applications beginning noon Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on October 2, 2012, and ending noon Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on November 3, 2012. In the past, system delays caused by extremely heavy demand in the final days of the registration period have prevented some applicants from registering for the program. No entries will be accepted after noon EDT on November 3, 2012, regardless of whether or not there are system delays during the registration period.

The State Department is once again utilizing web-based tools to notify entrants of their selection and immigrant visa (IV) interview appointment as part of ongoing efforts to combat fraud perpetrated against DV entrants. Starting May 1, 2013, entrants may enter their DV-2014 entry confirmation number into the Entrant Status Check, available at www.dvlottery.state.gov, to find out whether their entry was selected or not. Subsequently, selected individuals who respond to the notification instructions provided on the E-DV selectee confirmation page on Entrant Status Check will also receive notification of their scheduled IV appointment through Entrant Status Check. DV-2014 data will be available through Entrant Status Check until June 30, 2014. All entrants should keep their confirmation number until June 30, 2014, whether they are initially selected or not.

REMINDERS:

-- The DV-2014 program registration period will run from noon, EDT on October 2, 2012, through noon, EDT November 3, 2012. -- The DV-2014 program will be conducted entirely electronically, including electronic entry. Paper entries are not accepted. The Department website established for the submission of E-DV entries is www.dvlottery.state.gov.

-- Registered entries that comply with form submission instructions will result in the display of a confirmation screen page containing the applicant's name and confirmation number, which should then be printed. The confirmation screen page will provide information the entrant must use to electronically check the status of his/her own entry through the Entrant Status Check available at www.dvlottery.state.gov. Only those entrants who have their confirmation information will be able to check their Entrant Status and, if selected, receive application instructions and notification of their IV interview appointment. For DV-2014, we are including a link on the Entry Status Check page that will allow entrants to retrieve their confirmation number by entering their e-mail address, last name, and year of birth.

-- Entrants may prepare and submit their own entries or have someone submit the entry for them. Regardless of whether an entry is submitted by the individual directly or assistance is provided by an attorney, friend, relative, etc., only one entry may be submitted in the name of each individual, and the person entering DV-2014 remains responsible for ensuring that the information is correct and complete.

All entrants, including those not selected, will be able to check the status of their entry through the Entrant Status Check available at www.dvlottery.state.gov. Please refer to the DV-2014 Instructions at http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types_1318.html for complete program rules and answers to **Frequently Asked Questions** from entrants. These instructions should be read carefully as failure to comply with all the instructions could result in the disqualification of an entry.

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

SCAMS: The Department of State, Office of Visa Services, advises the public of a notable increase in fraudulent emails and letters sent to Diversity Visa (DV) program (Visa Lottery) applicants. The scammers behind these fraudulent emails and letters are posing as the U.S. government in an attempt to extract payment from DV applicants. All applicants should be familiar with information about DV scams provided by the Federal Trade Commission (www.ftc.gov). Applicants are encouraged to review the rules and procedures for the DV program so that you know what to expect, when to expect it, and from whom. For more information, go to the Department of State website on [scams](#).

QUB v UU: Mock Presidential Debate 2012



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To celebrate the upcoming U.S. Presidential Elections, the American Consulate will co-host a debate at QUB Students Union on **Wednesday October 24, 2012**.

Students representing Queen's University and the University of Ulster are set to go head-to-head, taking the role of the Democratic and Republican parties in a lively and light-hearted debate. Each will address current U.S. political issues by responding to questions asked by William Crawley of the BBC. The Student Unions of both institutions are actively involved in the organization and Queen's University of Belfast Students' Union will play host. The debate will be well attended by distinguished guests of the Consulate and universities as well as, we trust, scores of students supporting their teams. **Please RSVP ASAP via the email address listed below.**

Moderated by William Crawley, BBC Northern Ireland

6:30-9:00 p.m., Wednesday October 24, 2012

(light reception from 6:30pm; debate starts at 7:15pm sharp)

At: 'The Space', 1st Floor,
Students' Union
Queen's University, Belfast

RSVP: 02890 386110; or mckittrickp@state.gov

Please RSVP as soon as possible. Seats will be added on a first come, first served basis.

Ulster American Woman's Club

Notice from Ulster American Women's Club

The Ulster American Women's Club (UAWC) is a voluntary social group that meets monthly. It doesn't matter if you've been here 2 months or 20 years, living here short-term or permanently, we welcome you to connect with other American women and explore this wonderful land and culture in which we live. We try to mix up events to include social visits as well as cultural ones.

As you can imagine our club was dormant over the summer when many were off visiting family. We hope to meet some new faces and plan our events for the next several months. You can visit our Facebook page, Ulster American Women's Club, to ask about our upcoming events.

If you are interested in receiving monthly emails with more detailed and up-to-date information on all of our activities, please contact Sarah on 07889 384180.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

Millions of Americans travel abroad during the holiday months and encounter no difficulties.

However, U.S. embassies and consulates assist nearly 200,000 Americans each year who are victims of crime, accident, or illness, or whose family and friends need to contact them in an emergency.

When an emergency happens, or if natural disaster, terrorism, or civil unrest strikes during your foreign travel, the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate can be your source of assistance and information. By informing us about your trip or residence abroad, you help the embassy or consulate locate you when you might need them the most.

Signing up is voluntary and costs nothing, but it should be a big part of your travel planning and security. For more information visit the Department of State website at <http://travel.state.gov>.



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 Festival at Queens - October 19 - November 4, 2012 - The annual event returns with ever more world-renowned artists. This year's schedule include Ladysmith Black Mambazo and the internationally acclaimed Buena Vista Social Club. Get your tickets fast by visiting their website at www.belfastfestival.com.

Halloween Family Festival - Ulster Folk & Transport Museum - October 31, 2012 - Experience the ancient festival of Halloween. Visit their website, www.nmni.com, for more details.

Halloween Festival - Ulster American Folk Park - October 2012 - Take a tour around the park to experience and the thrills and chills of the Halloween festival. For details go to <http://www.nmni.com/uafp/What-s-on/Events/Halloween-Festival>.

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 **01253-501106**.

Consular Closure Dates

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

Monday, November 12, 2012 - Veteran's Monday
Thursday, November 22, 2012 - Thanksgiving Day
Tuesday, December 25, 2012 - Christmas Day
Wednesday, December 26, 2012 - Boxing Day
Tuesday, January 1, 2013 - New Year's Day



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KID'S CORNER

