



Appointments Are a Must!



Q: Who needs to make an appointment for passport services, a Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA), or have a document notarized? Must I appear in person?

A: Everyone needs a passport service appointment and everyone must appear in person, *except* for adults who are renewing a previously issued 10-year validity passport that has not been damaged. Likewise, everyone applying for a Consular Report of Birth Abroad or in need of a notarized document must make an appointment and must appear in person.

Q: How do I make a passport service appointment?

A: For individuals making an appointment in Mexico City, go to the U.S. Embassy Mexico City website: <http://mexico.usembassy.gov/> Choose "U.S. Citizen Services"

and then "Passports" to learn how to make an appointment.

For individuals who need an appointment in a U.S. Consulate outside of Mexico City, go to the U.S. Embassy Mexico City website and choose the appropriate consulate listed under the "Locations" button on the far right of the screen. Then look under that consulate's Citizen Services menu to determine how to make a passport appointment.

Q: How do I make an appointment for a Consular Report of Birth Abroad?

A: Similar to passports, for individuals making an appointment in Mexico City, first, go to the U.S. Embassy website: <http://mexico.usembassy.gov/> Click on "U.S. Citizen Services" and then "Report Birth Abroad" to see the instructions.

For individuals who need an appointment at another consulate, go to the U.S. Embassy website and choose the city under the "Locations" button on the far right of the screen. Then look under the Citizen Services menu to determine how to make a CRBA appointment at that location.

Q: How do I make a notary appointment?

A: Go to the U.S. Embassy Mexico City website: <http://mexico.usembassy.gov/> Choose the city where you would like to make your appointment. Then look under the Citizen Services menu for specific instructions.

Situations involving true emergency such as a lost/stolen passport or imminent travel of a U.S. citizen may be handled without a prior appointment.

Travel Tip

Mexico: "Know Before You Go!"

Millions of Americans visit Mexico safely each year. However, crime and violence affect many parts of the country, including both urban and rural areas. We encourage all U.S. citizens to phone home periodically to assure family members of your safety and inform them of your whereabouts. Remember, whether you travel to Mexico by land, air, or sea, you are entering a foreign country and are subject to the laws and regulations of Mexico.

For more information see:

www.travel.state.gov

www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_970.html

www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_5440.html

FAST Donates to Michou y Mau

Building on the work of previous committee members who were awarded a charitable grant, First and Second Tour (FAST) officers from U.S. Embassy Mexico City donated

\$3,000 worth of toys, computer games, and clothes to the Michou y Mau Foundation on August 10.

Officers Marti Boyce and Hollyn Green, current FAST

Committee members, implemented the grant based on the expressed desire of Mr. Eduardo Torres, Executive Director of Michou y (continued on page 2)



Get Your U.S. Federal Benefits!

Are you a U.S. citizen beneficiary residing in Mexico? Are you having issues or problems with your U.S. Federal Benefits, your direct deposit, or your Social Security questionnaire? Do you need to report a change of address?

If so, please call federal benefits at **01-800-772-6394** (within Mexico only.) Federal Benefits help is available from Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. You can also visit the Federal Benefits webpage via the U.S. Embassy - Mexico City website. Look under the U.S. Citizen Services menu.

The Federal Benefits office in Mexico

serves the following U.S. agencies: Social Security Administration, Veterans Administration, Railroad Retirement Board, Office of Personnel Management, and the Black Lung program of the Department of Labor.

You can also reach Federal Benefits via email at: FBU.Mexico.City@ssa.gov, FBU.Guadalajara@ssa.gov, or FBU.Ciudad.Juarez@ssa.gov

For more information, see: http://mexico.usembassy.gov/eng/eacs_fbu.html

The Grandparent Scam

One of the latest extortion techniques in Mexico involves a call placed by a person alleging to be an attorney, a U.S. Government employee, or even a Mexican official. The person calls someone's parents or grandparents and claims that the family's child or grandchild has been in a car accident/incident in Mexico and has been arrested. The caller then asks for a large sum of money to ensure the arrestee's release. When the recipients of the call later check on their family member, they discover that the entire story is false.

Please note that the U.S. Embassy / U.S. Government would never ask anyone to wire money directly to an individual employee in the Embassy, nor would a Mexican official have any authority to personally release someone who has been arrested in Mexico. If someone calls you or your family with a similar story to the one above, you should attempt to locate the alleged victim/arrestee where he or she would normally be in the U.S. If the person cannot be located in the U.S. and is really believed to have traveled to Mexico, please contact the U.S. Embassy or appropriate consulate before wiring any money.

For further information on scams, safety issues, and general information about Mexico, see:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/

Michou y Mau

(continued from page 1)

Mau, a non-profit organization dedicated to caring for Mexican children who have suffered severe burns. Mr. Torres requested that the committee's donation be in the form of toys, educational computer games, and clothing. Accordingly, with the assistance of the U.S. Embassy's transportation department, Ms. Boyce and Ms. Green purchased and delivered the gifts to the children who could not stop smiling, thrilled at the opportunity to choose their favorite toy. Mr. Torres and the Michou y Mau staff expressed their gratitude to the U.S. Embassy for bringing joy to the children and assisting in their rehabilitation since computer games are useful in helping the children regain coordination and balance.

On August 31, 2011, the Michou y Mau Rehabilitation Center inaugurated its new play center. Cherie



The Michou y Mau Foundation receives toys, games, and clothes from FAST members.

Feeley, Marti Boyce, and Hollyn Green, on behalf of the FAST committee and the U.S. Embassy, participated in the ceremony which included the Mexico City Health Minister, the President of Michou y Mau, and the Medical Director of Fundación Gonzalo Rio Arronte.

The Michou y Mau Foundation, with whom the U.S. Embassy has a long-standing relationship, serves over 8,000 Mexican children annually and provides not only immediate medical treatment for victims but also continuing

rehabilitation and support for the families of these children. Many of the severely burned children are transported to the Shriners Hospital for Children in Galveston, Texas, for medical treatment and rehabilitation.

For more information about the Michou y Mau Foundation, see: http://www.fundacionmichouymau.org/s_HOME/html/HOME.exr?I_A=

Bienvenidos to New Consular Leadership in Mexico

Like most summers, the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City has been undergoing a transition. However, unlike most years, three of the highest ranking consular positions at the Embassy have new officers. John B. Brennan assumed the position of Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs in August, Karin King assumed the position of Consul General in July, and Virginia Ramadan became the Visa Chief.



MCCA John B. Brennan



Consul General Karin King



Visa Chief Virginia Ramadan

John Brien Brennan

Mr. Brennan graduated from Columbia University in 1972, with a concentration in Chinese language. He earned an M.A. in Chinese Literature from Washington University in St. Louis in 1983. In 1985, Mr. Brennan joined the Department of State as a Foreign Service Officer.

With the Department of State, Mr. Brennan has been posted at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing China; the U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu, China; the U.S. Consulate General in Osaka, Japan; the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, Poland; and the U.S. Embassy in London. In London, Mr. Brennan served as acting Consul General and was presented with the Department's highest award for consular service in recognition for work done in London to institute post 9/11 changes to U.S. visa processing, including the introduction of biometric systems.

Mr. Brennan's other assignments have included service with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement. In the Bureau of Consular Affairs, Mr. Brennan instituted modernization projects for visa processing, information sharing, and the enhancement of interagency cooperation for border security.

Most recently, Mr. Brennan served as the Coordinator for the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative in the Bureau of Consular Affairs, and as the Senior Advisor in charge of implementation of the Global Support System for visa processing.

Karin King

Ms. King assumed the position of Consul General in July, following two years as Mexico City's Visa Chief. She joined the Foreign

Service in 1991 and has served in Poland, the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, and Germany in addition to multiple tours at the State Department in Washington. Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, Ms. King currently lives in Mexico City with her husband and two children.

Virginia Ramadan

Ms. Ramadan assumed the position of Visa Chief at U.S. Embassy Mexico City in late August. She has been in the Foreign Service for a total of 15 years, serving in Iraq; Beirut, Lebanon; The Bahamas; Tripoli, Libya; Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and Tunis, Tunisia. Ms. Ramadan was a law professor and practicing attorney outside of the Foreign Service. She is married and has four children.



Labor Day

Labor Day; How it Came About; What it Means

Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country.

Founder of Labor Day

More than 100 years after the first Labor Day observance, there is still some doubt as to who first proposed the holiday for workers. Some records show that Peter J. McGuire, general secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and a co-founder of the American Federation of Labor, was first in suggesting a day to honor U.S. workers.

But Peter McGuire's place in Labor Day history has not gone unchallenged. Many believe that Matthew Maguire, a machinist, not Peter McGuire, founded the holiday. Recent research seems to support the contention that Matthew Maguire, later the secretary of Local 344 of the International Association of Machinists in Paterson, N.J., proposed the holiday in 1882 while serving as secretary of the Central Labor Union in New York. What is clear is that the Central Labor Union adopted a Labor Day proposal and appointed a committee to plan a demonstration and picnic.

The First Labor Day

The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City, in accordance with the plans of the Central Labor Union. The Central Labor Union held its second Labor Day holiday just a year later, on September 5, 1883.

In 1884 the first Monday in September was selected as the holiday, as originally proposed, and the Central Labor Union urged similar organizations in other cities to follow the example of New York and celebrate a "workingmen's holiday" on that date. The idea spread with the growth of labor organizations, and in 1885 Labor Day was celebrated in many industrial

centers of the country.

Labor Day Legislation

The first governmental recognition came through municipal ordinances passed during 1885 and 1886. From them developed the movement to secure state legislation. The first state bill was introduced into the New York legislature, but the first to become law was passed by Oregon on February 21, 1887. During the year four more states — Colorado, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York — created the Labor Day holiday by legislative enactment. By the end of the decade Connecticut, Nebraska, and Pennsylvania had followed suit. By 1894, 23 other states had adopted the holiday in honor of workers, and on June 28 of that year, Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September of each year a legal holiday in the District of Columbia and the territories.

Courtesy of the Dept. of Labor
For more information, see:
<http://www.dol.gov/opa/aboutdol/laborday.htm>

An Evening of Friendship: The Conversation Club at Ben Franklin Library

Each Friday night, a visitor to the Ben Franklin Library in downtown Mexico City may wonder about the hum of lively exchange rising and falling from all corners. The animated voices come from professionals, homemakers, students, and others who come to participate in the free English language Conversation Clubs taught by U.S. Embassy entry level officers. The reluctant partings at the end of the evening are evidence that these gatherings are building friendships, one person at a time.

Since January 2011, the Conversation Club has attracted over 150 participants who come faithfully over an eight-week session. With five class levels running simultaneously, the clustered chairs create circles of impromptu classrooms, stretching the available space at the library—and pushing the boundaries just that much more when friends and guest spontaneously join in.

While the students receive instruction from skilled, native English speakers, the Embassy teachers also have the privilege of learning first-hand from their Mexican hosts. For newcomers to Mexico, there is much to think about when a business executive from Monsanto debates the concept of a "liberal" vs. "conservative" society with the professional clown, or as an elderly homemaker describes the renaissance of Mexico's traditional arts while her classmates listen attentively. This rich exposure to perspectives begins to bridge the divide between each other. The teachers freely admit that this is the best evening of their week. And judging by the number of students who participate, they, too, are charged by the free-flowing exchange of ideas.

The Conversation Club will begin its fourth cycle with placement interviews on Friday, September 9th. Everyone who comes—teachers, students, managers, guests—will be richly rewarded.