

Consul's Corner

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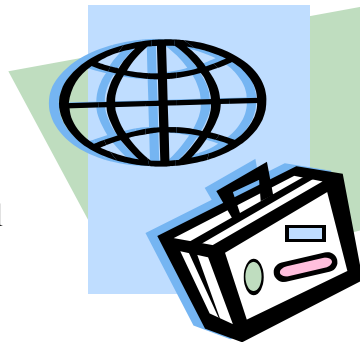
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Section switches: Saying goodbye!

Every year seems to bring changes in personnel at the Embassy and this year is no different. The Consular Section will be saying goodbye to two of our staff, too.

In March, the consular section said goodbye to our vice-consul, Sarah Schmidt.

In April, one of our Consular Assistants, Fen Key, will be departing post as well. We would like to say a fond farewell and 'Bon Voyage' to these two ladies and hope to welcome their replacements soon.



Goodbye, Sarah and Fen!

News Article Alert:

Speaking of travel, here are a couple of interesting articles. The first is about combining sightseeing and surgery was in the L.A. Times not that long ago. An interesting combina-

tion, and apparently cost effective, too. Maybe something to consider for your next long weekend?

<http://articles.latimes.com/2007/oct/21/business/fi-sunprofile21>

The second article is about sending money to someone else in a pinch. The author tested five different services and gives the pros and cons of each. http://biz.yahoo.com/wallstreet/080821/sb121927679430558581_id.html

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS FOR THE EMBASSY:

- April 13—16 (Monday - Thursday) : Thingyan (Water Festival)
- April 17 (Friday): Burmese New Year
- May 1 (Friday) : Workers' Day
- May 8 (Friday) : Full Moon of Kason
- May 25 (Monday) : Memorial Day

Our new Newsletter

We're making some changes: Our newsletter has had a face-lift. We hope you

like the new look. We will still include the topics we promised, and hope this

format will make the newsletter easier to read. Enjoy!

Highlight: Ask the Consul

Oftentimes, we find that folks have questions about what it is our section can (and can't) do, the visa application process, and other ins and outs of the Consular world. Sometimes, answers to these questions might be helpful to others in similar situations.

Want to check out some of these questions and their answers? [http://](http://burma.usembassy.gov/askconsul_uscitizen.html)

burma.usembassy.gov/askconsul_uscitizen.html



*Have a question about Consular services?
Check out Ask the Consul.*

Right now, we have questions

about what documents to bring to the visa interview, what to do if you're refused a visa, how to submit your application, and more.

We'd love to get more questions to add to our page. Email your question to consularrangoon@state.gov with 'Ask the Consul' in the subject line.

Hail to the Chief

The flag-draped western face of the U.S. Capitol in Washington briefly became the focus of worldwide attention on January 20 as Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th President of the United States and delivered his inaugural address, calling on Americans to meet the challenges that currently face them and telling the world that the American spirit "is stronger and cannot be broken." The live telecasts and webcasts of President Obama's inaugura-

tion ceremony united audiences all over the world.

"On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord." **President Barack Obama**

If you'd like to learn more about President Obama, or review the progress of his administration, check out the

new blog on <http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/>

The blog will follow President Obama's initiatives and policy directions. We'll look at new presidential orders, policies on the economy, alternative energy and foreign affairs, and his use of new media. We'll review the new president's progress and governing style, take a look at the challenges of governing the United States, and keep you informed about the fun moments as well.

Needed: Wardens for the Embassy

We have over 300 families registered with the American Embassy, but we only have seven people who have volunteered to be wardens. Seven people divided by over 300 is a lot of people to contact! So, what exactly does a warden actually do? A warden is the contact person for a group of registered Americans living in the same physical proximity in Rangoon or other areas of Burma. If there were an emergency and we couldn't send out emails (as happened

after the cyclone) the warden would be responsible for contacting the people on their "warden list" and sharing important information with their group. During an emergency we also try to send messages via courier, but at times it's faster for a warden to get the message out than it is for a courier service. Wardens also maintain their list of Americans by periodic phone calls and then let us know of any changes.

Wardens are also invited to attend some official functions given by the Embassy, such as the 4th of July celebration!

So please give some thought as to whether you can commit a small amount of time to maintaining a "warden" area. If the answer is yes, please contact Amy Robinson at consularrangoon@state.gov and she'll get you set up.

Tax Time: It's just around the corner

We're nearing that dreaded date when your Federal taxes (or at least an extension) should be filed. If you need any of the major forms and/or instructions for filing, please stop by the Consular section during ACS hours (Monday - Friday, 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.) . Alternately, you could go to www.irs.gov and they have all of the forms there ready to download and fill out.

News Article Alert:

While on the topic of taxes, here's an article that might be

interesting to some of you.
'New Law Makes Escape

Want to get more info and news about taxes? Check out www.americansabroad.org.

They have a wealth of articles on taxes (and many other topics) as they relate to Americans living abroad.

Tougher For Tax Exiles. "It's been called 'the ultimate estate plan': moving to a desert island or other far-off locale to escape the clutches of the

Internal Revenue Service. Indeed, hundreds of Americans do formally renounce their U.S. citizenship every year, many in order to protect their wealth from income, estate and gift taxes. But last week, Congress may have made life less rewarding for tax exiles." <http://online.wsj.com/public/article/print/SB121193252276024279.htm>
!

California voters take note: Upcoming primary

On Tuesday, May 19, 2009, there will be a special primary election in the 32nd Congressional District of California to determine the political parties' candidates to appear on the ballot for a special general election to be held on Tuesday, July 14, 2009, to fill the seat vacated by Representative Hilda Solis. If one candidate receives a majority of the votes (50% + 1) in the special primary election, no special general election will be held. To determine if your legal residence is in the 32nd Congressional District, click on www.fvap.gov/reference/about-elect-officials/index.html and then on "United States House of Representatives."

Registering to vote and requesting a ballot: All members of the U.S. Uniformed Services, their family members and citizens residing outside the U.S. who are California residents within the 32nd District should request a ballot for this special election by completing and submitting a registration and ballot request, Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), SF-76, by May 12, 2009, if you have not done so already this year. The online version of the FPCA is available from the FVAP website by clicking on the appropriate citizen at www.fvap.gov. The FPCA may be submitted by

fax or email in addition to regular mail. To send the FPCA directly by fax or email send to: Los Angeles County
Fax: (562) 929-4790
Email: militaryoverseasav@rrcc.lacounty.gov
The faxed FPCA should include a Transmittal Cover Sheet, which may be found at www.fvap.gov/resources/media/coversheet.pdf. After fax-



If you're a California resident in the 32nd District, it's time to cast your ballot!

ing, submit the original FPCA by mail

Your county elections official must receive the request for an absentee ballot not later than Tuesday, May 12, 2009.

Voters who are California residents within the 32nd District, who requested and received a ballot for the federal General Election on November 4, 2008, will automatically receive a special election ballot, and need not take any further action.

Returning your ballot: California allows overseas Uniformed Service Members and overseas citizens to return ballots by mail or fax, so long as they sign an oath to acknowledge they are waiving their right to cast their ballots secretly. If returning the marked ballot by fax, you must complete and sign the Transmittal Cover Sheet found at www.fvap.gov/resources/media/coversheet.pdf. When returned, your ballot will be counted if it is returned by close of polls on May 19, 2009.

Additional Information: State specific information on your precinct, candidates, elections, and voting is available at the California Secretary of State's website at: www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_mov.htm.

Questions regarding the above may also be referred to the Director, Federal Voting Assistance Program, Department of Defense, 1155 Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC, 20301-1155, vote@fvap.ncr.gov and on the World Wide Web at www.fvap.gov.

American Embassy Rangoon

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E-mail: consularrangoon@state.gov
Website: <http://rangoon.usembassy.gov>



Coming to Burma? AmCits register with us!

Please register with us! We welcome your visit to our Consular Section during American Citizen Service hours which are Mondays through Fridays, 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.. We are here to help you for routine and emergency services. We can better serve you if you are registered with us. Alternately, you may register online at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>
Please call us if you have any questions.

Burma Shavings: Want to get it?

If you would like to receive the Embassy's weekly newsletter the "Burma Shavings" electronically, please send an email to the Community Liaison Officer at clorangoon@state.gov. The Burma Shavings includes Embassy events, community events, classifieds, etc. Also, if you would



Subscribe to the Burma Shavings to get info about goings on in Rangoon.

like to advertise a classified or event in the Burma Shavings, please email [\[maShavings@state.gov\]\(mailto:maShavings@state.gov\) with your wording and contact information.](mailto:Bur-</p></div><div data-bbox=)