



*Embassy of the United States of America  
Rangoon, Burma*

Consular Section  
110 University Ave  
Kamayut Township, Rangoon

Tel: (95-1) 536-509; 535-756  
After-hours emergencies: 09-51-24330  
Fax: (95-1) 650-480  
Email: [consularrangoon@state.gov](mailto:consularrangoon@state.gov)  
Website: <http://rangoon.usembassy.gov>

December 2008

## Consular Section Newsletter

Dear American Citizen residing or traveling in Burma:

After a long hiatus, we're bringing back the Consular newsletter! We intend to distribute these updates on a quarterly basis. In order to make them as useful as possible, the newsletters will focus on consular news, updates and reminders about the services we provide. We'll also include links to related articles that you may have missed living so far from the United States. We hope you find this a valuable and useful resource.

Enjoy!

### Who's Who in the Consular Section?

This summer brought a large turnover at the Embassy, so you may see some new faces in the Consular Section the next time you visit:

**Colin Furst**, Consular Chief, arrived in Rangoon in late July 2008. He has been with the State Department since 1999, serving in Moscow, Russia; Bangkok, Thailand; and in Washington, D.C. Colin grew up in Baltimore, but most recently lived in Virginia.

**Sarah Schmidt**, Vice-Consul, has been in Rangoon since March 2007. She serves as Voting Officer, and was very impressed with the turnout for the election events this past season. Please see below for more about those events.

**Amy Robinson**, Consular Associate, has been working in the section since October 2006. Her previous post was in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and before that she

<http://rangoon.usembassy.gov>

worked in the private sector as a Purchasing Agent and Manager. Amy's name is probably familiar to you as she is the contact person for our warden list; if anyone has additions or edits for that list, please contact her at [consularrangoon@state.gov](mailto:consularrangoon@state.gov).

**Fen Key**, Consular Assistant, started with the section in July. Fen has been posted to Rangoon since October 2007. Her previous post was Brussels, Belgium. She has been working for the U.S. Government since 2002.

**Susie Brown**, Consular Assistant, started with the section mid-October 2008. Her previous posts include Niamey, Niger; Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; and Phnom Penh, Cambodia. This is her first time working in a Consular Section, and she is looking forward to the experience.

### **Consular Section Hours and Services**

The Consular Section is open Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. Our hours for U.S. citizens services are Monday through Friday, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Services offered include:

- Emergency Services - The safety and well being of United States citizens in Burma is the Consular Section's primary concern. Consular Officers and staff are able to assist Americans in distress, citizens who are the victims of crime, and those who find themselves in other emergency situations.
- Passport Services – The Consular Section can accept applications from U.S. citizens seeking to renew expiring or expired passports, add additional pages to passports, and replace lost or stolen passports.
- Birth Abroad - The Embassy will issue a Consular Report of Birth Abroad and a U.S. passport to newborn children. The Report of Birth Abroad is not a birth certificate, but it can often be used in place of one in the U.S.
- Voting Services - The Consular Section can show you how you can register to vote, request an absentee ballot, and assist with submitting your absentee ballot.
- Updated Lists of Local Resources – The Consular Section maintains lists of local lawyers, public notaries and medical professionals.
- Notarial Services - Consular Officers can notarize documents, certify true copies of documents, and administer oaths or affirmations to people executing affidavits.

Below are links to interesting articles highlighting two of the services listed above: issuance of new passports and adding blank passport pages:

<http://rangoon.usembassy.gov>

- What ever happened to the little blue books? “When I went to collect my newly minted American passport, I discovered that it came with a radically altered design that included sheaves of wheat, the rather large head of a bald eagle plus the flag wrapped around my picture. And that was just one page.” <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/29/weekinreview/29macfa.html>
- Add blank pages to your passport to be on the safe side. “Question: My adult son, traveling with his wife and child, was recently refused permission to board a flight from England to South Africa because he had only one blank page in his passport. How do you know which country wants more than one blank page?” <http://travel.latimes.com/articles/la-tr-spot9mar09>

### **Election Blow Out!**

This past election season was one of the most active voting seasons ever for Embassy Rangoon. The Consular Section hosted an absentee voter registration drive at the American Club, which brought in record crowds for this post. Additionally, the section hosted debate viewing parties at the club, the highlight of which was a packed crowd for the vice-presidential debate. We finished off the season with two voting days at the Embassy, one for early voters held in the Consular Section and one held a week later in the Embassy library. We know it's sometimes hard to be away from home at election time, so we arranged for construction of “traditional” voting booths, where our American customers could submit their absentee ballots as if they were voting back in their hometowns.

- Speaking of elections, “It's not unusual for folks to cast absentee ballots when they're out-of-town on election day -- some do it even if they are out of this world. Clay Anderson was about 215 miles above the earth when he cast his ballot last year for a series of proposition measures in his home town of League City, Tex. An astronaut and spacewalker, Anderson was on the international space station with a couple of Russian astronauts when he received his ballot via computer uplink. He filled it out and sent it back through cyberspace.” [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/15/AR2008101502976\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/15/AR2008101502976_pf.html)

### **Wardens Needed! Volunteer to be a Warden**

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

<http://rangoon.usembassy.gov>

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.

There is some fun relating to volunteering to be a warden: wardens are also invited to attend some official functions given by the Embassy, such as the 4<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:consularrangoon@state.gov) and she'll get you set up.

### **American Citizens New to Burma:**

Please register with us! We welcome your visit to our Consular Section 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. Please call us if you have any questions.

Planning on travelling for the upcoming holidays? Check out the World's Most Dangerous Destinations and make sure you're intended trip isn't headed toward potential trouble." In the 1970s, a traveler's worst nightmare might have been a hijacked plane or hostage crisis. Today, the threats are equally perilous but reflect the changing times. Now, a tourist or business traveler might worry more about terrorist attacks on mass transit, getting caught in a spontaneous uprising or a bombing of a nightclub or hotel."

[http://www.forbes.com/travel/2008/01/16/travel-world-dangerous-forbeslife-cx\\_rr\\_0117travel.html](http://www.forbes.com/travel/2008/01/16/travel-world-dangerous-forbeslife-cx_rr_0117travel.html)

### **"Burma Shavings"**

If you would like to receive the Embassy's weekly newsletter "Burma Shavings" electronically, please send an email to the Community Liaison Officer at [clorangoon@state.gov](mailto:clorangoon@state.gov). If you would prefer not to receive the newsletter but would still like to be notified of Embassy events, the CLO would be pleased to send that information to you separately.

<http://rangoon.usembassy.gov>

## **Upcoming Embassy Closures**

Thursday, December 25 – Christmas Day

Thursday, January 1 – New Year's Day

Monday, January 19 – Martin Luther King's Birthday

Thursday, February 12 – Union Day (Burmese Holiday)

Monday, February 16 – President's Day

Warm regards from the Consular Section,

Colin Furst

Consul