

## Introduction of appointment system for American Citizen Services

To improve our service to the American community in The Netherlands, starting in March 2008 the Consulate General will introduce an appointment-based system for all American Citizen Services (passport applications and renewals, reports of birth, notarial services, and general questions), except emergency cases. We will be sending a separate email bulletin in a few weeks on how this new system will work, and with final details and a starting date. We advise all citizens to check our website:

<http://amsterdam.usconsulate.gov> for updates, and to plan your visit to the Consulate. Questions can also be sent by email to:

[USCitizenServicesAMS@state.gov](mailto:USCitizenServicesAMS@state.gov) We will make every effort to accommodate applicants with an initial grace period. We expect this system to be a major convenience as far as providing efficient services and shortening wait times. **STAY TUNED!**

### Predator Drugs on the Rise

When you travel or live abroad, the odds are in your favor that you will have a safe and incident-free stay. Travelers and expatriates are, however, sometimes victimized by crime and violence, or experience unexpected difficulties. Happily, most problems can be solved with local support or by a visit to the Consular Section. There are other occasions, however, when U.S. consular officers are called upon to help U.S. citizens who have been victims of crime. Dutch police have informed the U.S. Mission that there has been an increase in cases involving "date rape drugs" in The Netherlands. The most commonly used drug in such cases is Rohypnol or "roofies". The use of such "predator" or "date rape drugs" is increasingly common in The Netherlands. These drugs are commonly used to exploit young females for drug-facilitated sexual assault. Because of the effects of these drugs, victims may be physically helpless, and can't remember what happened. All of these cases have one modus operandi in common. A victim is given a beverage and after that does not remember anything. The drugs often have no color, smell or taste and are easily added to flavored drinks without the victim's knowledge. These drugs can include things like alcohol, marijuana or other street drugs, designer or club drugs like ecstasy, over-the-counter sleeping pills and anti-histamines, even cold medications. *(Continued on the following page.)*

### Mark your calendars:

#### SOCIAL SECURITY BRIEFING:

On **Friday, January 25, 2008, at 2:00 pm**, the Consulate General will host a presentation by Mr. Mark Young, Regional Federal Benefits Officer based in London, who will present information and answer questions on **Social Security and other federal benefits-related issues**. Mr. Young will cover:

- why Social Security was created;
- what Social Security benefits are available and conditions for entitlement;
- how benefits are computed;
- Totalization: how it affects coverage of earnings and pension entitlement;
- the Windfall Elimination Provision;
- whom to contact to file for benefits.

His presentation will be followed by a question-and-answer session for the public. Please email [USCitizenServices@state.gov](mailto:USCitizenServices@state.gov) to register.

#### US INCOME TAX INFORMATION:

A representative of the **Internal Revenue Service's Overseas Tax Assistance Program** will be available at the Consulate General in Amsterdam on **March 11-13, 2008**, to provide information on tax law questions and how to prepare basic tax returns for wage-earners (1040EZ, 1040A, 1040, 1040-NR-EZ, and 1040-NR).

Thirty minute **appointments** at the Consulate are available from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm on March 11, 12 and 13, 2008. The tax consultant will also provide consultations by telephone (also by appointment in advance) from 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm on those days.

Appointments may be scheduled by contacting the Consulate General by email at [USCitizenServicesAMS@state.gov](mailto:USCitizenServicesAMS@state.gov), regular mail, or by telephone at 020 575 5309 during the American Citizen Services Unit's telephone hours from 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm. Please provide times and dates on which you are available, and we will respond as to whether an appointment can be confirmed during that time.

**Please remember to arrive at least twenty minutes early, and that personal effects other than papers may not be carried into the Consulate General and must be left at the entrance.**



The Consulate General is generally open for American Citizen Services on Monday to Friday from 8:30 until 11:30 am. **The Consulate General will be closed** on Monday, January 21, Wednesday, January 30, Monday, February 18, and Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2008. **In emergency cases involving American Citizens, please call 070 310 2209.**

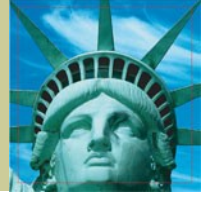




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## Consul's Corner



### *Are you interested in being a host for our Consular Outreach Program?*

During the last year we have provided consular services outside the Consulate in Limburg, Rotterdam and Groningen. This was possible due to the support of our hosts. If you are interested in hosting one of these events, please contact us at

*USCitizenServicesAms@state.gov*

For your request to be considered please bear in mind that the venue should not be in the greater Amsterdam region. We are looking for a minimum of 20 attendees, sufficient space for meeting with them, a separate waiting area for privacy and access to a copy machine. We look forward to receiving your e-mails!

### **Predator Drugs (continued)**

However, the term "date rape drug" applies mainly to three drugs. GHB (gamma hydroxybutyric acid), Rohypnol (flunitrazepam), and Ketamine (ketamine hydrochloride). Many factors make these drugs desirable to sexual predators. All traces of the drugs leave the body within 72 hours of ingestion and are not found in any routine toxicology screen or blood test. Date rape drugs are easily slipped into drinks and food and are very fast acting. They render the victim unconscious but responsive with little or no memory of what happens while the drug is active in their system. The drugs also make the victim act without inhibition. Date rape drugs render a person incapable of thinking clearly or of making appropriate decisions. This makes for a very passive victim; one who is still able to play some role in what is happening but who will have no clear memory of what happened after-the-fact. Without any memory of events the victim is often unaware that she has been raped, and even if she is aware or has suspicions, victims often make poor witnesses in subsequent criminal proceedings.

As the drugs are easily available, the solution lies in following these preventive measures:

1. Don't accept any drinks from other people, except trusted friends,
2. Open containers yourself,
3. Keep your drink with you at all times, even when you go to the bathroom,
4. Don't share drinks,
5. Don't drink from punch bowls or other large, common, open containers. They may already have drugs in them,
6. Don't drink anything that tastes or smells strange. Sometimes, GHB tastes salty,
7. Have a non-drinking friend with you to make sure nothing happens (if you are consuming alcohol),
8. If you think that you have been drugged and raped: Go to the police station or hospital right away. Don't bathe, or change clothes before getting help. These things may provide evidence of the rape.

### **Assisting Victims of Crime**

Crime Victim's Assistance is available at the Consulate General Amsterdam and at United States embassies and consulates throughout the world as well as through our counterparts in Washington, D.C. Consuls and local employees at overseas posts are familiar with local government agencies and resources in the country where they work. We can help you with issues such as: (1) Replacing a stolen/lost passport, (2) Contacting family, friends, or employers, (3) Obtaining appropriate medical care, (4) Addressing emergency needs that arise as a result of the crime, (5) Obtaining general information about local resources to assist victims, including foreign crime victim compensation programs, (6) Obtaining information about crime victim assistance locally and in the U.S. A helpful Counseling Hotline in the U.S. is operated by a non-profit organization, RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network). They operate a toll-free 24 hours a day/7 days a week hotline for sexual assault crisis counsel-

ing and can be reached within the U.S. at 1.800.656.HOPE. They also have information on the Internet including a Pilot Online Hotline at <http://www.rainn.org> (7) Obtaining information about crime victim compensation program locally and in the U.S. About half the states in the U.S. offer benefits to their residents who are victims of violent crime overseas. These states provide financial assistance to eligible victims for reimbursement of expenses such as medical treatment, counseling, lost income, and others. Generally, the programs require the victim to report the crime to law enforcement officials and obtain a copy of the police report. Further information and application procedures for each state is available through the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Board on the internet at <http://www.nacvcb.org> (8). Obtaining a list of local attorneys who speak English.