



USA shamed

The storming of the US Capital Building on 6th January brought shame to the USA. It threatens not only the USA, but World security.

The erstwhile "bastion of World Democracy" was reduced 3rd-world status of a Tin-pot Nation by gun-totting 'thugs' whipped to a frenzy by a President who cannot accept he's been beaten.

The Capitol display was shocking - but not surprising. Trump has been growing more 'unhinged' for the last 4 years. The man is a monster who has made America a laughing stock.

Trump is not going to disappear. If I was a praying man, I'd be down on my knees this morning - praying for a peaceful settlement to this disaster. I fear that's not going to happen.

Older Members may recall the horrors of WW 2 when the World's nations came together to defeat Fascism.

We must wish the American people well as they prepare to face the similar challenge from Trump and his Proud Boys.

Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon has a way with words. Unlike other nameless Politicians she's admired for her plain speaking she says things as they are ...

We've often heard her say she's "scunnered".

What exactly does "scunnered" say to those from south of the border?

... Latest VACCINE SCAMS update ...

DOOR CALLER - London Police are hunting a conman who tricked a 92-YEAR-OLD woman into paying £160 for a fake coronavirus vaccine. The victim allowed him into her home on December 30th when he said he was from the NHS and was there to give her the vaccine.

She said she was jabbed in the arm with a "dart like implement" before he charged her £160 which she was told would be refunded by the NHS. It's not known what substance, if any, was administered. The woman had no ill effects when checked at her local hospital.

TELEPHONE CONTACTS - NHS officials report elderly persons receiving calls offering Covid-19 services. The Officials insist that the general public *will never be phoned* asking for information. The NHS advice is to hang up immediately. They also warn that you should not Do open or respond to text messages and computer links about Covid-19 from unknown sources.

CHARGES - The COVID-19 vaccination is only available through the NHS to eligible groups. It is a free vaccination. **You will not be asked to pay at any time.**

Is it any surprise they're SCUNNERED by COVID?

Many older people I come in contact with tell me, like wee Nicola, they're they're "scunnered" with the virus and the lockdowns ... I but what exactly do they mean ... I looked it up in the Oxford English Dictionary, and I got "annoyed, discontented, or bored". Sorry, OED, but those don't quite convey the full meaning. They don't really catch it ...

Many older folk are sick to the back of their dentures with the pandemic - with everyone telling them to wear masks - telling them to stay 2 metres away from other people - telling them to stay at home - and so on ... They're bewildered by the constant chopping and changing of the rules.

For many older folk, the harsh reality of COVID means being stuck at home - with nobody to talk to - with not being able to pop in to their neighbour for a blether and a wee cup of tea.

Worst of all, it has meant going for weeks on end without seeing their kids or grand-kids - of not getting a wee cuddle when you're not feeling too great! They know they have little alternative but to go along with the rules - but there's a strong feeling that not enough attention has been paid to the plight

of 'lonely' pensioners - who are trapped in their homes - who don't have the established 'support bubbles' that the Government presumes will support and protect them through the crisis.

The COVID TIMELINE

January 29th 2020, two Chinese nationals fell ill at a hotel in York.

February 6th - a British businessman in Brighton was diagnosed with the virus after catching it in Singapore. This so-called 'super spreader' was later linked to 11 other cases - five in the UK.

February 28th - the first person to catch the virus in the UK - a man from Surrey, but who'd not been abroad - was diagnosed positive.

January 5th 2021 - the UK has now recorded more 70,000 deaths linked to the disease.

January 2021 - We're now in our 3rd 'lockdown' - with most of Scotland and the UK closed for business under the most severe restrictions yet.

A new strain of Coronavirus which is far more virulent has taken hold and is spreading across the UK

HAS ANYBODY THOUGHT

● If they put the COVID vaccine into beer.... then opened all the pubs

We could have the whole population vaccinated by next Friday!

● Another random thought Would it solve the problem of Global Warming if we asked everybody to leave their fridge doors open for a day or two



Are they enjoying themselves now?

With the arrival of various vaccines, the COVID threat should diminish somewhat over the next year. It won't disappear completely - and just like the flu' we may need to be vaccinated each year.

In the meantime, just to ensure we are not enjoying ourselves too much, the 1st January 2021 has brought another considerable threat We've all been 'BREXITTED' and we'll suffer the consequences of that for years to come.

SCHOOL CLOSURES - an alternative view

Some Politicians and Officials have objected to "putting children's lives on hold" by closing their schools. Here is a summary of a letter I read in the newspaper which sets out an alternative view.

"I would prefer to put a child's life on hold than to put his or her life at risk. Beyond the medical risk to the child, have those who object to closures considered any adverse effect on a child's educational progress due to watching their parents dying, or fearing that outcome".

The writer goes on to explain that as a teenager, she went through that experience, but at least her burdens at the time did not include "the thought that I had brought that disease home with me from school".

"In normal circumstances, school is an important part of a child's experience of life. But surely during a pandemic we must do all we can to avoid it becoming part of their experience of death."

It says a lot, doesn't it



Thanks for everything, Dave ...

UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis retired at the end of 2020 after 20 years as the union's most senior figure and 40 years' service to the Union. Dave led the union to a series of memorable achievements, including negotiating for a real living wage, pushing for the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act and winning equal rights on partner pensions and marriage for LGBT+ people.

Along the way, UNISON has established itself as the UK's largest union with over 1.3million members – one million of them women.

On behalf of all Scottish Retired Members, we thank him for his work for UNISON and the Union Movement and wish him a long, happy and well-deserved retirement.

Dave has had many farewell messages and tributes from Union colleagues and branches, politicians and international comrades. We asked some Scottish National Executive Council members who have worked with him over the years to give us their thoughts

“As Chair of NALGO's GP Committee, I developed a good working relationship with Dave. Amongst other things, we were part of the NALGO team in the UNISON merger and on the Campaign for the National Minimum Wage.

I have a deep interest in International Relations and found Dave to be a strong ally in pushing these. He was a friend who offered a valuable listening ear and support when needed.

It was a measure of Dave's character that we maintained that friendship over the years. As often over the years, I raise a toast to his outstanding period of office and a lifetime of service to our movement.

Congratulations on your retirement, Dave. Every success and happiness to you, Liz and the girls.”

John McFadden (Glasgow)

Dave was one of the foundations Unison was built on and he's continued to be one. We've been lucky to have him as General Secretary.

He's always supported, protected and promoted all services of the union. - Personally, I've always seen Dave as kind and considerate to individuals.

He's always seen every member as important as the whole of the union. He will be missed but I hope he will have a different way of offering his skills.

Claire McArthur (Stirling)

“Over my time on the NEC I've got to know and work with Dave in his role as General Secretary.

His passion and commitment to our union has been very evident. He is a fierce advocate for our lowest paid, especially women members, and a strong supporter of the equalities agenda and self-organisation.

“Dave's reputation for reaching out to members and activists across the union and across the UK has earned him a great deal of love and respect amongst grass roots activists and members. He will be missed and I wish him all the best for a long and happy retirement.”

Kate Ramsden (Aberdeen)

When Dave became General Secretary, Unison was merged but was NOT one Union. (Remember the notion that 'Underneath It's Still Only Nalگو?'). Over his tenure, Unison has become not just unified, but a large powerful player in

the TUC and internationally in Public Services International.

He knew the union inside out, having been involved in it throughout his entire career, and worked with lay members whether through negotiating groups or with the NEC. His successor needs to successfully manage the synthesis of professional management and lay control. Personally, his support and kindness through difficult times meant a lot “

Jane Carolan (Glasgow)

“I've known Dave since he was a National Officer in NALGO. There are many things which made him an outstanding trade unionist, but if I had to pick two things it would be his commitment to fairness and equality.

These principles have been at the centre of everything he has done and every policy he has promoted.

His work with minority groups was innovative and placed NALGO at the forefront of efforts to raise the profile and opportunities of under-represented groups and members.”

Jim White (Dundee)

GS Ballot Result

As RM News goes to print, we're waiting on the ballot result (to be declared on 11th Jan). There was four candidates ...

- Paul Holmes
- Christina McAnea
- Roger McKenzie
- Hugo Pierre

We'll cover the result in our next issue

Regional Retired Members Forum

The next Scottish Region Retired Members Forum meeting will be on-line on Wed.20th Jan. starting at 11.00am.

The Forum agenda will be issued before the date. If you want to join the meeting contact the Scottish Regional Secretary Barbara Fulton (contact details below) for the joining instruction and video link.

e-mail - babsunison@yahoo.co.uk mobile 07954380753

TAKE THE VACCINE

Senior Citizens should be getting their COVID vaccinations soon. If you have underlying health issues, you probably get a call from your local Medical Practice before the end of February.

When you are given an innoculation date, TAKE IT. The innoculation isn't for fun. It's essential. Our only hope of getting on top of the Virus is for everyone to co-operate with the NHS plan.

Put the date in your diary. Make sure you attend the vaccine centre at the correct time and date.

Thanks again for everything, Dave - All the best from all your friends in Scotland! Have a long & healthy retirement - You've earned it!

Silver Voices Campaigns Update

The Pensioners Campaigning organisation SILVER VOICES has issued its latest Campaigns Update and lists the issues currently being pursued by Silver Voices

**Covid-19 Pandemic
National Health Service
Free TV Licences**

If you want more information on any of these, visit the Silver Voices website ... silvervoices.co.uk



SILVER VOICES

Silver Voices is the only independent, individual membership organisation for senior citizens in the UK. Its bulletins are an invaluable source of information for persons working with older people.

The subscription is £8 per year and you can join on the SV website.

If you rely solely on the state pension and benefits you qualify for free membership. Simply e-mail your details to info@silvervoices.co.uk

Campaign Training For Older Activists

SV has also been working with other organisations on a programme to develop campaigning for older activists. They aim to develop and expand into a national network. Silver Voices will try to be a driving force behind the initiative.

DON'T FORGET YOU MUST STICK TO THE FACTS

- **FACE** coverings - always wear a face mask or covering in shops and other public places
- **AVOID** crowded places
- **CLEAN** your hands thoroughly and regularly
- **TWO-METRE** gap - remember 'social distancing' and keep a 3 metre (6 ft) gap between you and others
- **SELF-ISOLATE** and book a test if you have any sign of symptoms

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