



by Gordon Craigie

**Don't look back
in anger...**

***let's get ready
to boogie!***

NOW THAT we've passed the winter solstice, and enjoyed whatever form of mid-winter celebration, religious or otherwise, that was possible in this "unusual" year, it feels like the right time to reflect on 2020 and, more importantly, look forward to 2021. But should we look back in fear or anger, or look forward in hope and expectation?

Fear? We all know what we're dealing with now during this pandemic, and we should all know that our personal responsibilities – to ourselves, our loved ones and our fellow citizens – are to continue to follow the **FACTS** guidance:

- Wear **F**ace-coverings
- **A**void crowded spaces
- **C**lean our hands regularly, especially after touching external surfaces
- Maintain a **T**wo-metre distance from people outside our household or bubble
- **S**elf isolate and book a test if we experience Covid symptoms

By each of us following these simple rules we can reduce the levels of fear for ourselves and everyone else, and help to minimise the spread of this horrible disease. And science is coming to the rescue – as it usually does – right now, with a range of vaccines arriving to help prevent future outbreaks.

Anger? We may well be angry at the incompetence of the establishment charlatans in Westminster who didn't foresee the dangers in spite of the growing evidence back in February, who didn't act quickly or decisively enough to eradicate the spread in the way that countries like New Zealand did, who didn't implement a straightforward financial scheme to replace lost incomes and who shamefully, criminally, awarded lucrative contracts to their equally establishment and totally unqualified charlatan chums for a range of vital goods and services... but anger can be a destructive emotion if we don't channel it in a positive way.

Hope? We've used the "Hope over Fear" mantra in the Yes movement for some time now, and the whole point of that message is to encourage us to replace that negativity and crippling anxiety associated with fear with the positivity and optimism that naturally accompanies hope. Our hope for 2021 and beyond is for our government, our Scottish Government, to continue to protect us as best they can under the current circumstances while paving the way for the better future that we all know is possible as an independent nation, where our elected officials work for and with us, the people, instead of for and with their entitled cronies who are getting even more obscenely rich at the expense of us, the people.

Expectation? Well, we've all been expecting and anticipating, some less patiently than others, the announcement of our second attempt at regaining our independence and, as of St Andrew's Day, we now have it. The First Minister unequivocally stated, in relation to the upcoming election in May:



The vaccination programme will be rolled out in 2021

And in that election, I will seek your authority – no one else's – for a legal independence referendum to be held in the early part of the new Parliament.

So, our justifiable expectation is that our second chance will arrive in the not-too-distant future, and we must be ready to seize that chance this time around.

Spending too much time lamenting the tragedies of the past year will not benefit our mood. Of course, we will continue to mourn those we have lost, and feel that anger even more intensely as many of those lives could've been saved had the chumocracy acted differently, responsibly. New Zealand – with a similar-size population to Scotland remember – has, at the time of writing this, only suffered 25 Covid-related deaths to Scotland's more than 6,000. Just let that difference sink in... Could an independent Scotland have matched that achievement? Why not? We'll never know for sure, but all the signs are that the Scottish Government would've moved faster and harder, with restrictions on movement into and out of the country similar to those implemented by New Zealand, had we been independent. Yes, our government has handled the pandemic better, and kept us safer, than Westminster, but surely we can aspire to matching the best, and being the best we can be, rather than simply being better than the worst? We cannot change the past, but freeing ourselves of fear and channelling our anger positively can help us to move into the new year with hope and expectation aplenty.

A digression... Some years back I attended a weekend seminar in Glasgow – a "personal development" programme run by a motivational speaker, Jack Black. The weekend was a follow-up or refresher to a course my wife's employer had insisted she attend earlier in the year. I was actually an interloper, as one of her colleagues didn't want to go so, for one weekend only, I assumed the persona of "Robin"! Anyway, my main takeaway from the weekend was the genuine power of positivity and positive thinking. Not in any airy-fairy way – one of the speaker's claims was that if you visualised a free parking space intensely enough as you drive into Glasgow city centre then one would magically appear just as you arrived (really?) – but more about the power of

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Nicola Sturgeon – Hope over Fear