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Jings! Criwens! It's... Donald MacLeod

Home of the free ... and the land of the queue!

MILLIONS of folk around the globe reckon the USA is the land of the free, the home of opportunity, liberty, equality and diversity.

I ain't goannie argue with them. But to me it could also be known as the land of the QUEUE!

You expect it at Disneyland, where by the time you've finally got on the first ride you're talking like Mickey Mouse and it's time to go home.

But it also happens in the Big Apple.

Yip! Obviously you're a suspected terrorist when you arrive because you're not from the good old US of A, so you have to queue at immigration where you're given the third, fourth and fifth degree by crabbit customs officers.

You then queue for your luggage, you queue for a cab, at your hotel there's a queue and when you go for dinner ... yes, you guessed it, another queue!

When I went up to my room to get some kip I was expecting a bunch of Yank tourists (dressed in obligatory shorts, baseball cap, bum bag and oversized t-shirts) to be queuing to use my lavvy!

They say the city never sleeps. That could be because of the tidal wave of caffeine available from one of the 230 Starbucks.

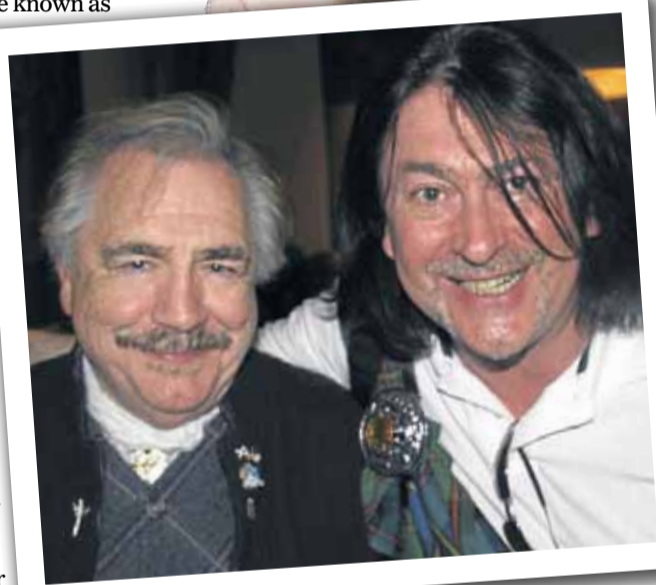
Then again you need a coffee to stay awake in case you lose your place in a queue!

Still, there was one line I was very proud to join — the annual Tartan Day Parade.

I was over in New York representing the charity I chair — Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy in Scotland — who held a competition to find a young act to take over to NY.

That band are called Song of Return and

■ I had a ball on parade in the Big Apple. Below — it was great to meet up with Scots star Brian Cox.



given the reaction they received over the Pond I'm sure they'll indeed return.

So there I was last Saturday, 'dressed to kilt' as they say, in the blazing sunshine, marching alongside my wife, Song of Return and harpist Phamie Gow.

Along with 4,000 marchers, pipers and drummers we paraded up 6th Avenue cheered on by thousands of expats and tourists.

At the end we were met by March Chieftain, Scots actor Brian Cox.

It really is a wonderful occasion, and it's no wonder the numbers taking part have swelled from the low hundreds to many thousands.

If this year's march is anything to go by the streets of NYC will be ringing to the heart-stirring skirl of pipes for years to come.

Now that's one queue that truly deserves to be the longest in the Big Apple!

I WENT swimming at the local baths the other day and decided to take a sneaky wee in the deep end. The lifeguard must have noticed though ... he blew his whistle so loudly I nearly fell in!

GIVEN that his surname sounds like a broken cludgy we shouldn't be too surprised when President Karzai of Afghanistan spouts another piece of verbal diarrhoea. This week his ungrateful emotive sewage was again directed at his paymasters and protectors, NATO. I just hope that when our troops leave Afghanistan they drop this corrupt cretin and his cesspool of an administration straight into a Taliban gully sucker. It's no more than he deserves.

OLYMPIC organisers were celebrating 100 Days To Go this week but if the majority of athletes are arriving in Blighty via Heathrow, they'd better stick another 100 on because it'll take them that long to get through customs, collect their luggage (if it's there at all) and navigate their way out of Heathrow and into London. The decision to hold it in London is about as sensible as having afternoon tea with the Taliban whilst dressed as Jesus and is the biggest waste of public cash since the Millennium Dome.

More trams? Pull the other one, Willie!

I HAD to laugh when Scottish Labour leader Johann Lamont said voting for Alex Salmond in the "Coouncil elections" was like asking Craig Whyte to fill in your tax returns.

Has she forgotten it was Labour's comedians, the Laurel and Hardy of politics, messrs Brown and Darling, that got us all into this fine mess in the first place?

Meanwhile the Lib-Dums, who exist somewhere between Alpha Centauri and the Twilight Zone, have come up with another vote winner. It was so good Wee Wullie Rennie (below) had me in stitches. Wait for it ... he said vote for us and we'll build more tram lines in Edinburgh. Ha ha ha! Someone please make him stop!

The Nats have pledged to invest in housing in Dundee, which begs the question where does everyone live at the moment?

As for the Tories, the man who gave the word State after Secretary some meaning, David Mundell, was trying to be heard above the

Tartan throng in New York.

Every time I see him I'm reminded of the tiny Dennis Waterman character in Little Britain.



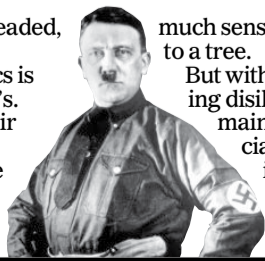
Monkeys are brighter than the fascist morons

AS the European economy sinks further down the plug-hole, it's no surprise there has been a surge in neo-fascist extremist groups looking to point the finger of blame at immigration.

From Greece to France, Norway to the UK, we all have our

fair share of shaven-headed, monosyllabic morons whose grasp on politics is equal to that of an ape's.

Actually, that's unfair on our simian friends — a monkey could see their hate-filled policies make about as



much sense as nailing jelly to a tree.

But with people becoming disillusioned with mainstream politicians and their inability to utter a truthful statement, more

and more will start listening to these vile groups.

They insist they're the true voice of the working class — utter rubbish!

It's scary stuff, and we must never forget what happened the last time a fascist got into power in Europe ...