



CLAYMORE

The Newsletter of the Council of Scottish Clans and Associations

Winter Edition March 2023

Special Issue

Good afternoon.

“Big doin’s” in Scottish politics happening this week--a three-way SNP leadership debate between candidates to succeed Nicola Sturgeon as SNP Party Leader--to be televised in Scotland. (See attached article from *The Scotsman*, below.)

Note: Angus Robertson, the SNP External Affairs Secretary, who visited us here in the USA last year for Tartan Day and who was considered a front-runner to succeed Sturgeon as First Minister, has taken himself out of the running and is leaving elected office to “spend more time with his family.” So, too, for Deputy First Minister John Swinney--a longtime SNP government minister.

So whoever ends up winning the SNP leadership contest, it will be a “fresh face” at the top of the ticket--first time in a decade. And that person is also likely to be the next First Minister of Scotland ...

Aye,

John King Bellasai

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From “THE SCOTSMAN”

Friday, 3rd March, 2023

STV will host a special 70-minute programme from 9pm to allow health secretary Humza Yousaf, finance secretary Kate Forbes and former minister Ash Regan to put forward their pitches. Colin Mackay, the broadcaster's political editor, will ask questions before the hopefuls cross-examine each other. Members of the public will also have an input.

Channel 4 will host a further debate on Thursday, with the 30-minute head-to-head taking place in Glasgow and kicking off at 7pm.

The three candidates will then take part in an hour-long debate on BBC Scotland on March 14 from 8pm. Mr Yousaf, Ms Forbes and Ms Regan will face questions from host Stephen Jardine and an audience in Edinburgh.

A series of party hustings for SNP members are also being held around the country, with the first having taken place in Cumbernauld on Wednesday evening. These were initially due to be held behind closed doors, with no media access, but the party U-turned on this following a backlash.

So what can we expect to feature in the TV showdowns? Here are five key areas to watch out for.

Independence

For most SNP members, this is obviously the big one. Where do the three candidates stand on the best route to independence? Mr Yousaf has distanced himself from Nicola Sturgeon's preferred strategy of fighting the next general election as a “de-facto” referendum. Instead, he would focus on building support “so we can definitively say that independence has become the settled will of the Scottish people”. Ms Forbes has also emphasised building sustained majority support. She told an SNP hustings that she would seek the transfer of the legal powers to hold a referendum within three months of the SNP winning the next general election. Under Ms Regan's leadership, meanwhile, the SNP would pledge to “begin independence negotiations” from day one of the new parliament if it achieves a majority of seats and votes cast in any election going forward. She calls this strategy the “voter empowerment mechanism”. It is not clear how it would work in practice.

Gender reforms

This is one of the big dividing issues between the three candidates. Mr Yousaf backs Ms Sturgeon's controversial gender reforms, which would make it easier for a trans person to change their legal gender by removing the need for medical reports. He insists the Scottish Government must challenge the decision by UK ministers to block this from becoming law. However, Ms Forbes says the reforms are “not a priority right now for the people of Scotland”. She said she would seek legal advice, but would “far rather sort out the legislation ourselves rather than having to go to court or without having to seek Westminster's permission around what we do next”. Ms Forbes has spoken of her concerns about gender self-identification. Ms Regan resigned as a minister over the reforms. She told an SNP hustings she would not challenge the UK Government's decision, “for the simple reason that we are going to lose that court case and we are going to be throwing probably hundreds of thousands of pounds of public money into something that the public don't support”.

Gay marriage

The start of Kate Forbes' leadership campaign was consumed by a row over her socially conservative religious views. She found herself at the centre of a media storm after she said she would not have voted for gay marriage if she had been an MSP at the time. Ms Forbes, who is a committed member of the Free Church of Scotland, later said she recognised her phrasing could have been better on this issue. She wants to move beyond it, but it is almost guaranteed to be raised in some shape or form. Mr Yousaf appeared to take a swipe at Ms Forbes during the SNP hustings on Wednesday evening. “It's so, so important that whoever is first minister, that whether you're lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, whoever you are, you can look the first minister in the eye, and

you can have confidence that they will not only protect your rights, that they will not only tolerate you, but that they will celebrate you and that they will advance your rights where they possibly can,” he said.

Policies and vision

What do the candidates actually want to do if they win power? There are clear differences in their visions for the country. Mr Yousaf is seen as the “continuity” candidate and is keen to emphasise his admiration for Ms Sturgeon and her administration, while also insisting there are things he would do differently. Ms Forbes seems to be positioning herself as more pro-business and focused on growing the economy, although she rejects accusations that she would move the party to the right. Ms Regan, on the other hand, is the self-confessed outsider and the candidate for change. Her pitch is directed at those SNP members disillusioned with the current leadership and impatient for independence. All three have begun to outline their policies, such as rethinking aspects of the SNP’s flagship National Care Service. Expect them to be pinned down on some of the details.

Economy and public services

The candidates will also inevitably face questions about the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and the state of public services, including the NHS. These are potentially tricky areas for both Mr Yousaf, who is currently the health secretary, and Ms Forbes, who is the finance secretary but has been off on maternity leave. Opposition politicians view Mr Yousaf’s track record as particularly weak, given the well-publicised problems facing the health service. Will he come under pressure from the public? The dispute over teacher pay could also be raised. Many parents will be hoping for a rapid end to strike action. How would the candidates handle such issues? There are no easy answers here.

The three SNP leadership candidates: Humza Yousaf, Kate Forbes and Ash Regan



Humza Yousaf



Kate Forbes



Ash Regan

25th Anniversary of National Tartan Day

Washington, DC, April 6th, 2023

The Annual Tartan Day Award--presented each year to deserving Scottish-Americans by the Scottish Coalition, USA (TSCUSA)--will this year be presented jointly on April 6th in Washington, DC, to **former Congressmen John («Jimmy») Duncan, Jr. (R-TN) and Mike McIntyre (D-NC), founding Co-Chairs of the Friends of Scotland Caucus in the House (2002 - 2019 for Duncan, and 2002 - 2015 for McIntyre)**--for their leadership in founding and chairing the Caucus, and for sponsoring the House Tartan Day Resolution (H.R. 41), in 2005.

As in years past, the award will be presented by the members of the steering committee of the Scottish heritage organizations that together make up TSCUSA. The venue will be the DACOR Bacon House--an historic mansion in downtown DC, located at 19th & "F" Streets, NW--just two blocks from the White House. The award will be presented during the Annual Tartan Day Reception, sponsored by the nonprofit National Capital Tartan Day Committee, Inc. (NCTDC). The Reception will run from 6:30 - 9:00 PM. To purchase tickets for the Reception, and the Symposium immediately preceding it, [visit their Website](#)

Both Mr. Duncan (below left) and Mr. McIntyre (below right) will attend the event. The award will be presented to Messrs. Duncan and McIntyre by Camilla Hellman, President of the American-Scottish Foundation (ASF), Peter Wilson, President of Scottish Heritage, USA (SHUSA), and John King Bellassai, President of the Council of Scottish Clans & Associations (COSCA), and Kenneth Lloyd, the new National Commander of the Scottish American Military Society (SAMS)--all member organizations of TSCUSA.





NATIONAL TARTAN DAY

H. Res. 41

U.S. House of Representatives

Whereas, April 6 has a special significance for all Americans, and especially those Americans of Scottish descent, because the Declaration of Arbroath, the Scottish Declaration of Independence, was signed on April 6, 1320, and the American Declaration of Independence was modeled in part on that inspirational document;

Whereas, this resolution honors the major role that Scottish-Americans played in the founding of the Nation, such as the fact that almost half of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were of Scottish descent, the Governors in 9 of the original 13 States were of Scottish ancestry, and Scottish-Americans successfully helped shape the Nation in its formative years and guide it through its most troubled times;

Whereas, this resolution recognizes the monumental achievements and invaluable contributions made by Scottish-Americans that have led to America's preeminence in the fields of science, technology, medicine, government, politics, economics, architecture, literature, media, and visual and performing arts;

Whereas, this resolution commends the more than 200 organizations throughout the United States that honor Scottish heritage, tradition, and culture, representing the hundreds of thousands of Americans of Scottish descent, residing in every State, who already have made the observance of Tartan Day on April 6 a success; and

Whereas, these numerous individuals, clans, societies, clubs, and fraternal organizations do not let the great contributions of the Scottish people go unnoticed: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that a day should be established as 'National Tartan Day' to recognize the outstanding achievements and contributions made by Scottish-Americans to the United States.

passed, U.S. House of Representatives on March 9, 2005, by unanimous vote.

U.S. Representative Mike McIntyre
District, North Carolina
Original Sponsor

Mike McIntyre 5



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Council of Scottish Clans & Associations, Inc

A 501(c)3 non-profit organization

COSCA was founded in 1976 by Dr. Herbert MacNeal and a handful of other dedicated volunteers for the purpose of supporting Scottish Clan organizations and preserving Scottish heritage.

COSCA's founding statement of charter and mission continues today as our current Trustees, members and volunteers continue to work towards the goals of:

- Strengthening the Scottish American community by bringing individuals together with their Scottish Clans and Associations;
- Supporting our member Scottish organizations with training and resources to help them meet their own missions;
- Providing education and learning opportunities in Scottish fields;
- Building relationships with Scotland and the global diaspora.

COSCA is not chartered nor interested in assuming management of individual Clan societies. This newsletter does not accept any responsibility for the opinions expressed within the newsletter, nor does it restrict the reasonable opinions of other groups.

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