

PROPOSED SLATE

2021-2022 TIANS Board of Directors

Virtual Annual General Meeting – October 6, 2021

BOARD MEMBER	SECTOR	OFFICER
HRM		
Marie Manning <i>Halifax International Airport Authority</i>	Transportation	Director
*Sean Doucet <i>SilverBirch Hotels and Resorts</i>	Accommodations; Food & Beverage	Director
*Wayne Carter <i>FIN Atlantic International Film Festival</i>	Recreation & Entertainment	Director
NE NOVA SCOTIA		
Kevin Toth <i>Fox Harb'r Resort</i>	Recreation & Entertainment; Accommodations;	Secretary/Treasurer
Leslie Wilson <i>Ski Wentworth</i>	Recreation & Entertainment	Director
SW NOVA SCOTIA		
Neil MacKenzie <i>Yarmouth and Acadian Shores Tourism Association</i>	Tourism Services	Director
Judy Saunders <i>TIANS Past Chair</i>	Tourism Services	TIANS Past Chair
CAPE BRETON		
Robert Bernard <i>Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network</i>	Tourism Services	Director
Blair Pardy <i>Parks Canada</i>	Recreation & Entertainment	Director
INDUSTRY AT LARGE		
*John Simon <i>Canadvac/Kefi Travel</i>	Travel; Tourism Services	Director
CHAIR OF TIANS		
Wes Surrett <i>Pictou Lodge Beach Resort</i>	Accommodations; Food & Beverage	TIANS Chair
CHAIR OF NSTHRC		
Beatrice Stutz <i>Le Caveau Restaurant, Domaine de Grand Pré, The Inn at the Winery</i>	Food & Beverage; Accommodations	NSTHRC Chair

*Indicates NEW Board Member for 2021/2022

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Officers:

Wes Surrett – General Manager, Pictou Lodge Beachfront Resort

Originally from Petitcodiac, New Brunswick where his parents owned and operated the Homestead Motel, Wes Surrett graduated from UNB Fredericton in 2000. He went on to manage several properties currently operating the Pictou Lodge Beach Resort. In 2014 Wes was one of the first hotel managers in Nova Scotia to receive the Professional Certification for Hotel General Manager offered through the emerit program with support from the Nova Scotia Tourism Human Resource Council and Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council. He currently sits as President of the Ship Hector Society and as Past Chair for Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shores. Wes is the proud recipient of the inaugural Fleur Mainville Tourism Ambassador Award in 2015 for his contributions to tourism. Wes resides in the town of Pictou with his wife Kate and two children Evan and Ella.

Judy Saunders – Chair, Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia

From 1973 until 2012, Judy was affiliated with the management of the Old Orchard Inn and since 1989 she had served as President and majority shareholder of the Slumber Inn Ltd in New Minas until 2017. Judy has been an active member of the tourism community, involved in numerous associations and efforts to improve the business environment for tourism. Judy has been active on a number of Boards over the years - Tourism Partnership Council, TIANS, and Board of Directors/Secretary Treasurer for the former Evangeline Trail Tourism Association and Destination Southwest Nova Tourism Association. Judy was an interim Board member of the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency, instrumental in establishing the operating guidelines. Judy has had a long-time commitment and involvement with Choice Hotels International, Eastern Kings Chamber of Commerce and the Nova Scotia Innkeepers Guild. In 2009 Judy was recipient of the Crystal Award of Excellence, Tourism Person of the Year. With over 40 years of practical experience as an employee, business owner, risk taker, volunteer and traveler; Judy shows strong leadership skills and her passion and commitment is demonstrated through her involvement in the industry and in her region.

Kevin Toth – President, Fox Harb’r

Kevin Toth is the President of Fox Harb’r Resort in Wallace, Nova Scotia. Kevin is a veteran hospitality and development executive who took the reins as president of Fox Harb’r in 2015. From 2004 – 2009 Kevin was President & Managing Partner of Rockwater Secret Cove Resort in British Columbia. He was COO at Skyline International Development in Ontario, while holding the President and COO role at Skyline Hotels & Resorts from 2009 – 2015. Kevin has been active in the tourism industry for many years. He was the Chair of the Edmonton Hotel Association and sat on the Board of Directors for the Alberta Hotel Association as well as Tourism Whistler. He held the Chairman’s position with the Sunshine Coast Tourism Association and has been a long-time Member of Skål, joining the Travel and Tourism Professionals Association in 1986.

Beatrice Stutz – Owner/Manager, Le Caveau Restaurant, Domaine de Grand Pré

Beatrice Stutz was born and raised in Switzerland where she was trained in the Pharma industry. After a 3 month stay in San Diego California to learn English, she gained experience in the restaurant industry by working in a Restaurant in Luzern Switzerland. In the Spring of 2000 Beatrice and her family moved to Nova Scotia and opened Domaine de Grand Pré and Le Caveau Restaurant. Beatrice has gained experience in the hospitality/tourism industry over the past 19 years as restaurant and event manager for Le Caveau and Grand Pré Wines. The winery, restaurant and now The Inn at Grand Pré Winery, have become a very popular destination for individual and group travelers from all over the world. In 2021 Beatrice and Jason Lynch opened Cumin, an urban café and eatery in Kentville, based on locally sourced and supportive agriculture.

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Directors:

[Robert Bernard – Executive Director, Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network \(NSITEN\)](#)

Robert Bernard has worked with the Wagmatcook Culture & Heritage Centre as a consultant, Operations Manager and Culture & Tourism Planner for the Wagmatcook First Nation. In 2014, Mr. Bernard was appointed to represent Nova Scotia as one of the initial founders of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), and moved onto the Executive Board in 2015. Mr. Bernard played a pivotal role in bringing the 2016 International Aboriginal Tourism Conference to Membertou First Nation. As Conference Chair and Event Manager he helped bring together over 350 participants from around the world. In December of 2016 he was elected as the Executive Chairperson for ITAC, for a two-year term. He worked to establish the first Provincial based Indigenous tourism organization, the Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network. In May of 2017 he was elected to the Board of Directors for TIANS and was appointed to the Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council in June 2017. Mr. Bernard works very hard to bring cultural awareness and a better understanding of diverse populations together with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal individuals, groups & organizations. He is also a very dedicated family man and community volunteer is married to his beautiful wife Kelly and has four wonderful children Jordynn, Kaylyn, Cassidy & Karmin.

[Wayne Carter - Executive Director – FIN Atlantic International Film Festival](#)

Now in his 9th year as Executive Director of FIN Atlantic International Film Festival, Wayne joined FIN after a time in Business Development with tech-start up success story Radian6 now a part of Salesforce. His Nova Scotia life began in 2009 after a lengthy career in Toronto. Born in New Brunswick, Carter moved to Toronto in the mid 1980's after several years of cinema management where he embarked on a career of business management primarily centred around film. Serving as Regional Director for Roger's Video, Branch Manager and National Procurement Manager at Video One Distribution, Managing Director of Canadian Operations for East Texas Distributing (ETD), Vice President and General Manager of Famous Players Media (now Cineplex Media) and Vice President, Sales for Warner Brothers Home Entertainment. Carter's passion for films is matched only by his passion for music and his history of applying his solid business acumen to roles that engage his personal interests which has contributed to a successful and rewarding career. This extensive insight into film exhibition and consumer behaviour has allowed him to take the Atlantic Film Festival into a new era of success and sustainability.

[Sean Doucet - Senior Director, Operations – SilverBirch Hotels & Resorts](#)

Sean Doucet recently assumed the newly created role of Senior Director, Operations for SilverBirch, managing the SilverBirch portfolio, providing operational direction and guidance to the hotel teams as well as working collaboratively with other disciplines to achieve operational and financial growth objectives. Sean has been with SilverBirch Hotels & Resorts since 2018 having held the position of Director of Operations for the Delta Halifax within their Marriott managed portfolio. In October 2019 Sean was promoted to General Manager of both the Hotel Halifax and the Barrington Hotel. Prior to Sean's tenure with SilverBirch he managed the Operations team at the Hotel Halifax as well as having held the position of Executive Chef from May 2002 to September 2009. Sean holds a culinary arts diploma and by all accounts still considers himself to be "a foodie". He is committed to the professional development of the industry through training and mentorship opportunities. Sean has also served over the years on a number of tourism related boards and committees including the Hotel Association of Nova Scotia and Destination Halifax.

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[Neil MacKenzie - Executive Director, Yarmouth and Acadian Shores Tourism Association \(YASTA\)](#)

Neil MacKenzie is the Executive Director for YASTA, the destination marketing organization for the Yarmouth & Acadian Shores tourism region. Neil obtained a B.A. from Saint Mary's University in 1997 and then attended NSCC. In 2001 he graduated from the printing technology program. Neil learned how to survive in Japan without speaking a word of the language while working as an English teacher. Before joining the team at YASTA Neil delved in entrepreneurship when he formed a marketing company with a long time friend and university classmate. At age 35 he was elected to Yarmouth Town Council and focused his efforts on initiatives that supported tourism and alternative energy - working with regional partners for the return of the international ferry link, developing a municipal green energy project and free wifi for visitors. In 2013 Neil joined the YASTA team becoming Executive Director shortly after. His focus has been in forging strategic partnerships with all levels of government and the private sector, and growing tourism in the region. He's convinced that tourism development offers innovative growth opportunities for rural economies in Nova Scotia. He's seen this happen in his own community when the people choose to work together for mutual goals.

[Marie Manning - VP Business Development & CCO, Halifax International Airport Authority](#)

Marie Manning was a senior leader with St. John's International Airport Authority for 16 years, leading air service and business development, marketing, corporate communications and the passenger experience activities at Newfoundland and Labrador's premier transportation gateway before joining Halifax International Airport Authority as the Vice President, Business Development and Chief Commercial Officer in 2020. Her accomplishments have been recognized locally and within North American, having led teams that received awards for marketing, public relations, crisis communications, business development and customer experience. Marie holds a Bachelor of Commerce (BComm) Co-op degree from Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador and a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) degree from the University of Victoria.

[Blair Pardy - Parks Canada Field Unit Supervisor, Cape Breton](#)

Born in Cape Breton and a graduate of Nova Scotia Survey Institute, Blair worked as a surveyor for 4 years before returning to school for forestry at the University of New Brunswick. Upon completion of his BScF in 1991, Blair accepted a job as a Park Warden at Cape Breton Highlands National Park where he worked for 20 years in Parks Canada's Atlantic Service Centre as the Regional Forest Ecologist. Blair accepted the position of Field Unit Superintendent in Fundy National Park in 2008, a position he held for 6 years. In 2014 the opportunity to come home to Cape Breton presented itself. Blair is now responsible for CB sites including, Highlands National Park, Fortress Louisbourg Historic Site, Alexander Graham Bell Historic Site, St. Peter's Canal Historic Site and Grassy Island Historic site as well as Marconi Historic Site. At the 2017 TIAC annual conference, the CBFU was awarded the prestigious Visa Canada Innovator of the Year Award. Blair's approach to getting things done is that of a collaborator. He loves to work private sector, industry, government or academia to achieve common goals. Blair has a broad and diverse network that helps further the goals and mandate of the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia and share the truly remarkable treasures of our great province with the world.

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John Simon - President, Canadvac Travel Services & Kefi Travel

John Simon is an experienced business professional operating in both multinational organizations and entrepreneurial start-up businesses. His work experience covers a wide range of industries including travel, telecommunications, energy, government, logistics, financial services, and resources. His business and technology background has allowed him to build and manage teams in the development of new business, delivering new customer solutions, and defining and implementing new corporate strategies. Currently John is sharing his passion for travel through Kefi Travel, a unique organization offering customized personal travel experiences for its members, as well as through Canadvac Travel Services. Canadvac is a leading receptive travel specialist for Eastern and Central Canada which is focused on local tourism partners and providers. Canadvac prides itself in offering quality tourism products, highlighting smaller accommodations and unforgettable experiences showcasing the unique diversity of the region.

Leslie Wilson - President and General Manager, Ski Wentworth

Leslie Wilson spends her winter on the slopes of Ski Wentworth, where she has been President and General Manager for close to 20 years. She's co-chair of Kerr Controls and part of the management team at Wilsons Fuel. She is currently Chair of the Atlantic Ski Resort Association and sits on the board of the Canadian Ski Council. Leslie graduated from the University of Toronto with a degree in physical and health education, and earned a journalism degree from Humber College. Leslie worked in print and TV journalism at CBC Newsworld, MITV (now Global), the National Sport Centre-Calgary and the Calgary Sun. A former national team track and field athlete, Leslie has been inducted into the University of Toronto Sport Hall of Fame and the Truro Sport Heritage Society Sport Hall of Fame, and was Nova Scotia female athlete of the year in 1986. Leslie previously sat on the boards of the Colchester Community Workshop Foundation, the Nova Scotia Home Builders Association and the Nova Scotia Oil Heat Association.