



## NOMINEES FOR POSITIONS ON THE TOTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

October/November 2011

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**SHARON BOND** (*nominated by the TOTA Board of Directors*)  
*President & CEO, Kekuli Aboriginal Foods Inc. (West Kelowna)*

Sharon was born and raised in Lower Nicola, just outside Merritt, and is a member of the Nlakapamux (Thompson) Nation, from the Nooaitch First Nation. She moved to Westbank in 1988, took a number of college business courses, and has worked in Westbank and in Kelowna for the past 22 years – including for 10 years as an Aboriginal Student Advocate.

She also operated her own catering business for a period of time, and in 2005 started a Bannock Business. In 2009, she opened Kekuli Aboriginal Foods Inc. In 2010 she was voted in as the Thompson/Okanagan Regional Representative for the Aboriginal Tourism Association of B.C.

Sharon's interest in tourism began with her first job in Merritt, at age 16, as a staff member at the Merritt Chamber of Commerce tourism booth.

*"I believe there should be some First Nations representation on the Board of the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, especially because there are many companies and organizations in the Thompson Okanagan region that would benefit from creating partnerships and opportunities with First Nations. I hope that by being a member of the Board of Directors, I will inspire others to get involved, and I look forward to giving back to the communities by sharing my business experience and knowledge."*



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### **DON BROGAN**

*General Manager, Walnut Beach Resort (Osoyoos)*

Don Brogan is currently Chair of the Destination Osoyoos Board of Directors. He grew up in Oliver, graduated from Southern Okanagan Secondary School, and attended Okanagan College, Capilano College and the University of B.C., studying business, accounting and computer science.

In 1989-91 he worked in Ottawa for Western Economic Diversification and the Canada Revenue Agency, and then returned to work as a grocery store manager in B.C. In 2001 Don became General Manager of the Osoyoos Holiday Inn in 2001. In 2007 he took on the position of General Manager of the new Walnut Beach Resort in Osoyoos. He completed his Masters of International Hotel Management, from Royal Roads University, in 2009.



Don has been on the steering committee of Oliver's annual Festival of the Grape and he is former director of the Tourism Committee of the Osoyoos Chamber of Commerce.

*"Given that Tourism is the major economic driver for Osoyoos, being on the Board of TOTA will help ensure that Osoyoos and the surrounding region will be best served by the organization and its programs. As I have been a passionate marketer of Osoyoos and the South Okanagan region for more than a decade, and being the current Chair of our local Destination Marketing Organization, in volunteering my time to sit on TOTA's Board, I feel my expertise and experience will benefit both TOTA and Osoyoos."*

### **GENE COVERT (nominated by the TOTA Board of Directors)**

*Co-owner, Covert Farms and Dunham & Froese Estate Winery (Oliver)*

Gene was born and raised in Oliver and spent much of his youth enjoying life on the family's 660-acre farm – Covert Farms - before he went to boarding school in Vancouver starting with Grade 10. He holds a B.Sc. degree in Physical Geography from UBC.

After a brief period of world travel, Gene began to manage crews back the family farm. He and his wife Shelly worked on the farm until his father passed away in 2004. Since 2005, they have started a winery, developed an agri-tourism destination, converted 142 acres to certified organic production, and secured a long-term lease for the remainder of their productive land.



*"Having lived in the Thompson Okanagan region for 40 years I've seen many changes – and, having travelled to some of the most populated regions of the world, I've seen changes that I would not like to see for this region. I think we are at a crossroads of development and sustainability where we must tread carefully and gently going forward. We have tremendous opportunity, with the diversity of natural assets, to stand out as a model to the world of how to do it right."*

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### **RUSSELL CRITCHLOW (nominated by the TOTA Board of Directors)**

*Owner, River Safari (Blue River)*

Russell was born and raised in Central B.C. and now lives in both the Thompson and the Okanagan, spending the last 13 summers in Blue River and winters at Big White near Kelowna. His working career has been spent building small businesses – with his experience including eight years in the logging industry, nine years in forestry and environmental consulting, and the last 13 years in the tourism industry, operating River Safari.

*“I am excited about the opportunity to share my passion for providing ‘once-in-a-lifetime’ experiences with our visitors. We have so many unique, special and iconic places to share. I strongly believe that by developing strong partnerships and innovative ways of co-operating and co-marketing each other, visitors could more readily see all we have to offer. If we can do that, we will create lifelong memories and stories that will be told over and over for years to come. They will market for us – and that will keep our seats and rooms full with excited guests eager to find and tell their own stories.”*



### **JOHN DOUGLAS (nominated by the TOTA Board of Directors)**

*General Manager, Nancy Greene’s Cahilty Lodge (Sun Peaks)*

John was born and raised in Winnipeg and studied at the University of Manitoba, earning a Bachelor of Commerce degree.

He has 22 years of experience in the resort hotel business – 10 years at Whistler, three years at Panorama, and six years at Sun Peaks. He began his career in resort hotels as a controller and quickly rose to become General Manager. John now owns his own management company, which operates Nancy Greene’s Cahilty Lodge.

*“I am interested in serving on the TOTA Board because I really want to know more about the regional tourism industry, and I want to have the opportunity to provide my own input.”*



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### **GORDON FITZPATRICK** *(nominated by the TOTA Board of Directors)*

*President, CedarCreek Estate Winery (Kelowna)*

Gordon earned a BA in Economics from UBC in 1983. In 1983-84 he served as Special Assistant to then-federal cabinet minister Jean Chrétien, and served as Director of Western Operations in the Office of the Leader of the Opposition in 1990-91. He also worked for 10 years in the mining industry, serving as Vice-President, Corporate Relations and Secretary of Viceroy Resource Corporation.

Gordon is now President of the family-owned CedarCreek Estate Winery, which grows, produces and sells 100% premium B.C. wine. CedarCreek was named Canada's Winery of the Year at the 2002 and 2005 Canadian Wine Awards. Gordon is responsible for the operation of four vineyard sites totaling 150 acres of premium vinifera vines, the production of 40,000 cases of wine, the running of two wine shops, and the marketing and sales of two brands – CedarCreek Estate Winery and Greata Ranch Vineyards.



Mr. Fitzpatrick also served as Chairman of the B.C. Wine Institute (2004-06), is currently a Director of the Canadian Vintners Association and the B.C. Estate Winery Association, and is a member of the Minister's Council on Tourism. In addition, he is also a Director of Greata Ranch Holding Corporation (a property development company). Gordon was also the founding Co-Chair (2001-06) of the Okanagan Partnership, a regional economic initiative sponsored by the National Research Council and UBC Okanagan. In 2001-05 he was a Director of the Economic Development Commission of the Central Okanagan Regional District. He also served as a Director of the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Bid Corporation.

*"Tourism has become a big part of the wine industry, so being on the Board would give me an opportunity to have input from our sector. I sit on the provincial Minister's Advisory Council on Tourism, and it would be nice to be involved at the regional level as well – to combine that with my sense of what is happening from the bigger perspective."*

### **CHRISTOPHER NICOLSON**

*President, Tourism Sun Peaks*

As President of Tourism Sun Peaks, Christopher is responsible for the promotion of experiences featuring wine, events & festivals, accommodation, soft adventure, golf, and ski. This portfolio provides him with a cross-sector approach to promoting the resort, the region and the province.

Most of his career has been connected to Sun Peaks in its emergence as a major tourist attraction in the B.C. Interior and as one of Canada's leading ski destinations. His portfolio also includes experience at St. Anton, Austria, and Silver Star and Whistler-Blackcomb in B.C.

Christopher has served the Boards of Directors of the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association and the Canadian Destination Ski Consortium, and he was a founding member of Golf Kamloops. He is active in tourism initiatives involving air access, Tourism BC and the Canadian Tourism Commission.



*"In my career I believe I have demonstrated an intense commitment to regional and collective marketing, and I place a high priority on consensus building and strategic partnerships."*

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**BRAD PELLETIER** *(nominated by the TOTA Board of Directors)*

*Vice-President, Okanagan Region, Wesbild Holdings Ltd. (parent company of Predator Ridge Resort – Vernon)*

As Vice-President, Okanagan, Brad is responsible for all aspects of Wesbild's operations in the area, including Predator Ridge and Turtle Mountain. He joined Wesbild from Melcor where he was Vice-President for the Kelowna Region and President of Melcor Lakeside. His position included supervising the development, operations and marketing of Black Mountain Golf & Residential Community as well as overseeing Melcor's other assets in B.C.

Prior to that, Brad was Senior Vice-President & Managing Director for IMG Canada, a unit of the world's largest, most diversified sports and entertainment management company. Under his leadership IMG achieved the vision and business model to significantly improve operations and financials. Prior to IMG, Brad worked for Burrard International whose businesses include a number of marquee golf facilities.

Brad is a graduate of the University of New Brunswick and the London School of Economics. He has served on the Boards of national golf and sports associations as well as several charitable Boards.

*"I have made the decision to run for the TOTA Board as I feel I can be a valuable contributor both in terms of strategy and direction. At my former role as SVP of IMG, we had one of the world's largest tourism and municipal marketing practices and I have personally worked with most of the key regions across Canada. My move to the Okanagan marks the 10th city and 5th province in which I have lived – and I can objectively state that no region in the country has as many balanced tourism drivers as the Okanagan. The region is well-positioned for the future, and a well-developed and executed strategy will be the hallmark of growth and differentiation."*



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**SALLY PIERCE (*nominated by the TOTA Board of Directors*)**

*Assistant General Manager, Global Spectrum Facility Management/South Okanagan Events Centre Complex (Penticton)*

Raised and educated in Wales, Sally earned a diploma in Business Management. She now has more than 25 years of experience in the hospitality and event-management industry. In the U.K. she worked for Digital Equipment Company (DEC) planning meetings and events and in 1988 was selected to attend Digital's worldwide client appreciation event, held in France.

Prior to joining Global Spectrum in 2008, Pierce spent a number of years working for Fairmont Hotels and Canadian Pacific Railway. She began in 1996 as Convention Manager for the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise. Fairmont then moved her into the role of Sales Manager and in 2000 she was moved to Calgary to join the start-up team of the Royal Canadian Pacific, CP Rail's high-end vintage luxury train. In addition to the luxury rail tours, Sally designed tailor-made packages, notably the Royal Fly-Fishing Adventure. In 2006 the Royal Canadian Pacific was awarded the World Travel Award for the "World's Leading Luxury Train".

In her current role with Global Spectrum, Sally is Assistant General Manager of the South Okanagan Events Centre Complex – a City of Penticton-owned facility which includes the Events Centre, the Penticton Trade & Convention Centre, Memorial Arena, the Okanagan Hockey Academy, and the Penticton Vees Junior A Hockey Club. Global Spectrum is a leading private venue management company. Sally lives in Summerland.

*"I am running for the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association Board of Directors because I believe my career experience will bring a relevant and associated contribution to tourism at the regional level. Our region is geographically extensive and culturally broad. While this is a strength, it is imperative for all stakeholders to promote and sustain a consistent and collaborative vision which will leverage our marketing funding and outreach."*



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### **JUDY POOLE (nominated by the TOTA Board of Directors)**

*Director, Ironman Canada Race Society & Okanagan Fest-of-Ale (Penticton)*

Judy is a past Chair of Penticton & Wine Country Tourism, and is a Director of the Okanagan Fest-of-Ale. The Okanagan Fest-of-Ale is a working Board, and Judy is proud of the significant charitable contribution the Festival has made over the years. She was the President of Penticton & Wine Country Chamber of Commerce for the years 2004-05 and 2005-06, undertaking such initiatives as the planning and building of the Wine Country Visitor Centre, and overseeing the tourism and economic development departments during that time.

Like most Penticton residents, Judy has been involved with Ironman Canada for many years, in a variety of volunteer roles, and serves as a Director of the Ironman Canada Race Society. In her tourism role she has worked closely with Ironman in establishing a long-term commitment to the community.

Judy currently serves on the TOTA Board of Directors, as Secretary-Treasurer.

Judy was raised on Vancouver Island and moved to the Okanagan 20 years ago. She works as a financial advisor and branch manager with Raymond James Ltd. in Penticton.

*"I really believe the future of tourism is the integration at all levels – the DMO, the RDMO, and Tourism BC. By being part of the TOTA Board, I can help with that key integration."*



### **KELLY WATT (nominated by the TOTA Board of Directors)**

*General Manager, Sandman Hotel & Suites Kelowna*

Kelly grew up in B.C.'s Lower Mainland and earned an Education degree from Simon Fraser University. She was bitten by the Hospitality bug early, while working at a golf course and restaurants to pay her tuition.

She worked in Ontario in the hotel food and beverage with Delta Hotels. She was able to transfer back to B.C. with the Delta chain, and she spent 20 years with Delta back in the Lower Mainland, progressing to become Director of Food & Beverage in a large conference property.

When the Sandman Hotel Group purchased, Kelly took on the role of Assistant General Manager at the Sandman Hotel Vancouver City Centre, and in 2006 she transferred to Kelowna as General Manager of the Sandman Hotel & Suites Kelowna, now the second-largest hotel in Kelowna.

Kelly is currently a member of TOTA's Board of Directors.

*"The Sandman Hotel Group has a large interest in the Thompson Okanagan region, with seven properties from Penticton to Blue River, and our company has great reason to support tourism efforts in the areas covered. We recognize the benefits of a regional focus and how the different communities in the region can support and enhance each other. My own passion for and interest in supporting the tourism initiatives throughout the region have expanded considerably during the last two years of participating on the TOTA Board, and I am enthusiastic about contributing to the further development of this Association in strengthening tourism and the benefit that come from it for our region."*

