

July/August 2019

**Sept. 19:  
Network  
at PIC's fall  
social**



September's coming, when it's back to school, back to work and time to reconnect with your indie peers at the PIC Fall Social.

Join PIC members and friends to network, socialize and have fun at this casual get-together. Have a drink and grab a bite to eat while you make new friends and get to know others better. Get advice from your fellow indies, or compare notes about how small communications businesses can succeed and thrive.

We'll be meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 19 at the [Duke of York](#) pub, 39 Prince Arthur Ave. (steps from the St. George subway station). It's pay-your-own-way for drinks and food, but the fun and fellowship are 100% gratis!

[REGISTER NOW](#)

## Take the leap and leave your mark

By *Ellen Gardner*

Have you ever yearned for change? Hungered to find a path that feels more authentic, freer, unpredictable?

**F**or years, I've yearned to jump out of my office cubicle and start creating that life.

I understand those who hold back from making this dramatic leap. My colleague Philip tried it once (when he was let go from his job) and says he woke up in a cold sweat every night, panicking as he imagined being penniless on the street. Security matters and that's why most of us tough it out.

My own philosophy about a career has always been a bit different: **This is it, our one life, our one career and one chance to leave our mark.** Short-term stints in difficult or unsatisfying jobs are unavoidable, but how can it be healthy or wise to stay for years in a job that isn't fulfilling?

I've always loved working in corporate communications, and one of my greatest satisfactions has been transferring my skills to different companies and industries. My most recent position was in many ways the most satisfying – diverse projects, stability and a great team. But after seven years, I had met all its challenges and had accomplished my biggest goal, which was promoting

Philip to the manager role.

So, I jumped – but not without a plan. I had lined up two contract teaching jobs and secured a regular freelance project from my old employer. It was sad to say good-bye to the steady paycheque, the team and the secure cocoon of the company, but the pull to a different life of my own making was just too strong.

Has it gone according to plan? Well, if I was looking for change and unpredictability, I have found it! The teaching is more demanding and more satisfying than I ever could have imagined. Naively, I thought I would master it in a couple of months. Not even close – moving into teaching is one of the toughest things I've ever done.

Even as I spend hours juggling the many elements of classroom life, I take special pleasure in working with people who are hungry to soak up the knowledge I have painstakingly gathered over the years.

I'm working harder than ever and earning less than I did 10 years ago. Does that bother me? No, it's the life I have chosen, and I have faith it's taking me in the right direction.

In one of many interviews the late Anthony Bourdain gave, he talked about his early years as a dishwasher, the basis for his bestselling book, *Kitchen Confidential*. Why was that time so important in his life? "I like to be at the bottom of a very steep learning curve," he said.

That's an apt description of where I find myself at this transitional time of my life – I'm at the bottom of a steep learning curve. No predictability, just a lot of hard work, and an appreciation for the fact that I must keep moving forward. It's a good feeling.



*Ellen Gardner is a teacher, corporate communicator and career counsellor in Toronto who loves to cook, dance and take care of international students in her free time. She can be reached at [ellenm.gardner@gmail.com](mailto:ellenm.gardner@gmail.com). This is a condensed version of an article that appeared in IABC/Toronto's [May Communicator](#) (login required).*

# The independent view

By *Nkiru Asika*

I'm delighted to be making my debut in *The Buzz* as your new PIC Chair. As many of you know, the new IABC/Toronto board term kicked off on July 1, ushering in a new chapter President (**Lindsay Falt-Grillet**) and a new board. As VP, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), I consider it a privilege to represent PIC on the board and to chair this vibrant group for the 2019–2020 term.

I am stepping into the very large shoes of **Sharon Aschaiek**, who has been our fearless leader for the past several years and has done so much to grow PIC's profile and reputation. Although she's earned a well-deserved break, we're all thankful that Sharon is mandated to remain on the executive as Past Chair.

There are a few more changes in the executive team, and I'd like to take the opportunity to thank **Donna Papacosta** (former Past Chair) and **Bill Smith** (former Director of Social Media) for all their contributions, time and energy volunteering for PIC for so many years. We'll miss you!

I'd also like to formally welcome **Kathy Lim**, our new Director, Membership; **Nancy Ellen Miller**, our new Co-Director of Communications; and **Deana De Ciccio**, a PIC veteran who designs *The Buzz* and is now our new Director, Design.

Much appreciation also to the hard-working and talented ladies who round out the PIC executive: **Sue Horner**, Co-Director of Communications; and **Judy Irwin** and **Sharon McMillan**, Co-Directors of Programming. The position of Director of Social Media is still open. Please contact me if you're interested in taking this on.

As always, we're cooking up a great mix of professional development and social events to help you grow your business, expand your networks and build your capacity. While we're still working on the calendar, you can look forward to an evening social next month (with a little twist!) and a seminar in November on the increasingly important role of video and how best to use it in your communications practice. Stay tuned for updates on speakers and panels in upcoming issues of the IABC/Toronto e-Lert, *The Buzz* and on the website.

Finally, if you have any ideas for professional

development topics, possible speakers (including yourself) or any questions, concerns or ideas about PIC, please don't hesitate to reach me at [toronto-sig@iabc.toronto](mailto:toronto-sig@iabc.toronto).

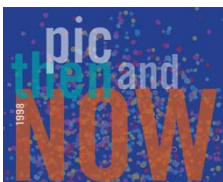
Here's to a great 2019 – 2020 term!

Onwards and upwards,  
**Nkiru Asika**  
Chair, PIC; VP, Special Interest Groups, IABC/Toronto



## Changes to the PIC member list due October 28

As a PIC member, you can promote yourself at no charge on the [PIC member list](#), which is updated quarterly on the IABC/Toronto website. Send your updates to PIC's director of membership, [Kathy Lim](#), by **October 28**. For new profiles, send your name, company name, city, email address, telephone number, website URL and a brief description of your business (about 40 words).



## Read up on PIC's history

How did PIC start? What are some early stories and stats? What do members say about us? Read all this and more in *PIC Then and Now*. The booklet marked our 20th anniversary in 2018, and

was created by [Cathy Ledden](#), RGD, and her associate, Susan Mosdell, RGD. Download a PDF of the booklet from the [PIC page](#) on the IABC/Toronto website (scroll down to Resources).

## See you on social media

Build and strengthen your connections with other PIC members, advance your communications business, discuss business issues and network with PIC on social media: on Twitter at [@pictoronto](#); LinkedIn, [IABC Toronto Professional Independent Communicators](#); Facebook, [Professional Independent Communicators \(PIC\), part of IABC/Toronto](#).

Recent posts include advice for making your work more tangible, mid-year business tune-up ideas, the value of handwritten notes, contract tips and more.

*The position of **Director of Social Media** is still open. Please contact [Nkiru Asika](#) if you're interested in taking this on.*

# Welcome new PIC members



**JACQUI DEBIQUE**  
Pediatric Oncology Group  
of Ontario  
Toronto  
416-592-1232 x 266  
[Email](#)  
[Website](#)  
[LinkedIn](#)  
Twitter: [@jdebiq](#)

Jacqui DeBique is a communications specialist with a passion for writing, editing and project coordination. She has worked in the not-for-profit sector for the majority of her career, in-house, and as a freelancer under the banner of Quite Write Communications.



**VANESSA HOLDING**  
Arc + Crown Media Inc.  
Toronto  
416-451-9573  
[Email](#)  
[Website](#)  
[LinkedIn](#)  
[Facebook](#)  
Twitter: [@arcandcrown](#)

Arc + Crown Media provides video strategy to engage your audience, educate your employees, simplify your message, and humanize your brand. We help organizations communicate important, complex or boring information in a way that gets attention and compels action.



**KATHY LIM**  
Branding Your Success  
Toronto  
647-287-2858  
[Email](#)  
[LinkedIn](#)

As a brand strategy consultant, copywriter and editor who loves helping businesses better reach their target audience, Kathy takes a special interest in working with ambitious, creative entrepreneurs to differentiate their personal brand and scale their impact.



**NANCY MILLER**  
EdTech Mark  
Toronto  
[Email](#)  
Websites:  
[EdtechMARK](#)  
[NancyEllenMiller.com](#)  
[LinkedIn](#)

With a rare blend of creative and commercial acumen, Nancy is an experienced communicator specializing in technology, education, and corporate learning.

[Professional Independent Communicators](#) (PIC) is a special interest group of [IABC/Toronto](#). PIC's mission is to support independent IABC/Toronto communicators through professional development, networking and marketing. [IABC](#) connects communicators from around the world with the insights, resources and people they need to drive their careers and the profession forward.

**THE BUZZ** *The Buzz* informs members about upcoming events, shares professional development tips from past meetings and keeps us connected. Editor this issue: [Sue Horner](#) | Graphic design: [Deana De Ciccio](#).

**Want to recap a meeting or do other writing for *The Buzz*?** Contact [Sue Horner](#) or [Nancy Miller](#).

## Quick links

- [PIC on the web](#)
- [PIC on LinkedIn](#)
- [@PICToronto](#) on Twitter
- Email us: [toronto-sig@iabc.to](mailto:toronto-sig@iabc.to)
- [Join our mailing list!](#)
- Get a copy of [The Independent Life](#)
- [Find back issues of The Buzz](#)

## PIC executive

Contact any of us with questions, comments and ideas for speakers or topics:

Chair: [Nkiru Asika](#)

Past Chair: [Sharon Aschaiek](#)

Communications: [Sue Horner](#), [Nancy Miller](#)

Membership: [Kathy Lim](#)

Programming: [Judy Irwin](#), [Sharon McMillan](#)

Social Media: (*vacant; let us know if you can help!*)

Design: [Deana De Ciccio](#)

