

Untitled

Originally Published in *Nursing Leadership*, 22(4) : 1–2 March 2010

As I write this, the end of the year is approaching and so is the end of my time as editor-in-chief of the *Canadian Journal of Nursing Leadership*. Seven years. A good length of time to be editor, but also long enough. It is time for a new vision, new perspectives and new energy for this important publication. It has been a privilege to be associated with this journal and with Longwoods Publishing. Leaving is easier knowing that Dr. Lynn Nagle will assume the editorial chair. Lynn is well known as an expert in nursing informatics and is the founding president of the Canadian Nursing Informatics Association. Readers of this journal are familiar with her through the informatics column that she has written for several years.

Editor-in-chief is an important role, but its importance has become clearer to me in retrospect – more so than when I took up the role in 2003. As editor, you have the right and the responsibility to determine what gets published

and what is rejected. The former is a cause for celebration, made easy when the peer reviewers unanimously agree on a worthy paper and recommend publication. It's much more difficult if there is a split and the editor-in-chief is required to use her judgment or go to a third reviewer, which can extend the time to a decision by several weeks at best. Rejecting a paper is much more difficult and, in most cases, a reluctant decision, knowing the amount of work that the authors have put into it. Our peer reviewers are crucial to the process, and they serve us well. Several of our reviewers are called on regularly – probably, from their perspective, too regularly – because of their expertise in particular areas. The entire approval process would collapse if it were not for the thoughtful and timely response from our reviewers, and I thank them for their dedication over the past seven years.

Editorials are the other major responsibility of editors. For me, this is probably the most difficult and, at the same time, the most rewarding aspect of the role. Editorials are simply short essays, usually at the front of the journal, that express the editor's opinion. They may relate to a current event or to any topic of interest to the editor. At times the intent is to persuade the reader. Thus, my editorials have provided me with a platform to state my views on a wide range of issues that have arisen over the past seven years. Some I have felt passionately about, and these have been the easiest to write; others addressed subjects that I felt needed more attention in terms of policy, research or practice. This opportunity to state one's opinion does not exist in most other professions with the possible exception of teaching, but that audience is limited and students can simply choose to tune you out. I've had lots of experience with that.

When a paper is written, especially an editorial, the reader has the choice of whether to read it. If it is read, then the reader can choose to respond, but my experience as editor is that the vast majority do not. An occasional editorial has generated a response, usually when readers disagree; but most of the time, except for some emails or occasional comments in person (which I have very much appreciated), there has been little response. I had hoped that *CJNL* might start to challenge the *British Medical Journal* in generating letters to the editor, but the *BMJ* continues to reign in this category, both in the quality of the editorials and the number of letters in response.

End

I look forward to reading Lynn's editorials, and what I hope will be many responses to them.

Because of the creative and energetic promotional expertise of Longwoods and particularly its publisher, Anton Hart, *CJNL* has expanded its readership enormously. The journal is now literally read around the world. This raises the question about how Canadian in orientation the journal should remain. Currently, it is very Canadian except for its research reports, because most of the other types of papers are based in a Canadian context. This is something for Lynn, the advisory board and ACEN to wrestle with.

Thank you for your support over the last seven years. It has been an honour to be introduced, and to introduce myself, as the editor-in-chief of *Nursing Leadership*. I pass that honour on to Lynn, and wish her only good things as she assumes the editorship.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dorothy Pringle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'D'.