Less Is More

I have found that the older I get, the less flexible I feel. My inflexibility seems to creep into all the dimensions of my life—physical, emotional, and professional. There was a time when I prided myself on my ability to go with the flow. Lately, however, it seems that I need to purposely shake myself out of the strong inclination to just keep everything familiar. I suspect that these feelings may resonate with many of my contemporaries in the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS). Fact is, I hate getting older, but I hate more the rigidity that seems to go with it. Of course, we cannot just stay the same. We must stretch and grow and challenge ourselves not to be satisfied with what is but rather to try to improve our little corner of the world.

To many of you who have been longtime, loyal watchers and readers of this journal it must seem as if, in the last few years, we change something every time you turn around. What is a reliable and consistent part of our professional lives seems to constantly undergo changes. As we approach 2003, we again will make some significant changes. These decisions were not made lightly and are intended to improve the service we provide, maintain our quality, and streamline both the way in which we deliver information and our ability to keep doing things in an increasingly expensive and competitive arena.

Since 1991, ONS members have received 10 issues of the Oncology Nursing Forum (ONF) each year. Eight of those issues contained articles and features, and two were conference issues—one for Congress and one for the Institutes of Learning (IOL). Beginning in January, ONF will be published only six times a year. All six issues will contain articles and features. Every other month, members will receive our sister journal, Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing (CJON). The two conference issues now will be distributed as journal supplements. The Congress supplement will be mailed with the March/April issue of ONF, and the IOL supplement will come with an issue of CJON. These changes were planned two years ago by a team of ONS volunteers and staff members who came together to analyze and recommend long-range publication strategies. They represent achievement of the vision and goals of this group.

You may wonder about the wisdom of these changes in light of the fact that it was only in January of this year that we initiated online-exclusive publication of selected articles specifically to reduce time-to-publication of a large backlog of accepted articles. At first glance, reducing the number of journal issues would seem counterproductive if we have such a large number of articles. In fact, although the number of issues is being reduced, we are simultaneously increasing the size of each issue. More articles will be published in a year’s time than ever before. Each of the six issues will contain 10–12 full-length articles, many offering continuing-education credit. In addition, each issue will have two to three “Online Exclusive” articles. In doing the math, you will realize that we will be providing as many as 90 articles a year to readers. Even in our best years, we published only 60–70 articles per year. This new configuration will allow us to give you more quality content without competing with the concurrent arrival of CJON. I believe this is a pretty good deal for all of us.

A third big change will come in the form of our processes to receive and review articles. In January, I will provide more details about our plans to convert to an electronic system for manuscript submission and review. This will result in significant improvements in the speed, efficiency, and costs of manuscript handling. At the same time, we hope to increase opportunities for RN and associate members to participate as reviewers. Be sure to watch these pages for more information.

2003 will be a busy and important year for this journal. Adapting to change can be tough, but I believe that these changes will be good for us all. I look forward to the challenge and hope your feedback along the way.