

Endings and Beginnings

By Mary Knight, RN, BScN, MN, CPN(C)

ORNAC has reached another milestone. Our Editor, Agnes Forster and our Publisher, Ron Forster will be retired by the time you are reading this. We have come a long way together since the first issue was published in February 1983. With their retirement, Ron and Agnes have turned the Journal over to ORNAC, and I would like to express our heartfelt appreciation. Best wishes for a happy retirement!

When the Journal was created in 1983, ORNAC was still just a vision in the hearts of O.R. nursing leaders. General duty staff nurses, educators and managers from across Canada saw the value of creating an organization to promote the issues and concerns of perioperative nursing. Many of the members of the 1983 National O.R. Executive Committee, ORNAC's predecessor, continued to contribute as ORNAC formed and developed. No less than four ORNAC Presidents, one ORNAC Treasurer, three ORNAC Secretaries and several ORNAC Board members came from the Executive Committee pictured in that first Journal!

In that first issue, Ron Forster, Publisher of the *Canadian Operating Room Journal* wrote: "The creation of this national publication for the operating room nurses of Canada initially seemed an impossible undertaking. Indeed, it would have been a more difficult task, but for the dedication, encouragement and advice of so many, many fine people."

Muriel Shewchuk, President and National O.R. Executive Chairperson, provided food for thought in her message entitled "Gold Fish in a Bowl". "Nowhere in the field of nursing is a nurse as exposed as in the operating room theatre where intense, complex, multifaceted patient care is at its height". Muriel then set the scene of a day in the "fish bowl" life of an O.R. nurse, ending with the

comment: "The intraoperative process can be greatly enhanced by the highly skilled, educated, caring nurse – truly a gold fish of bright shining colors".

Other articles included in that first Journal were: Meet the Team – A Case Study; Facing the Trauma of Death as an OR Nurse; Risk Management for Operating Room Staff; and, Preventing Infection in the Operating Room (in English and French). These timeless topics are as appropriate today as they were nearly nineteen years ago!

To our Publisher, the Editors, contributing authors, advertisers, and past and present members of the ORNAC Editorial Advisory Committees, thank you for all your hard work over the years in ensuring the success of this publication!

As we end one era, we begin another one for ORNAC's official publication! Members of the ORNAC Editorial Advisory Committee, chaired by Kim McLennan-Robbins (Alberta), have been working diligently over the past year to meet the challenge and launch a new Journal early in 2002. Details will soon be available - watch for news on the ORNAC website (www.ornac.ca).

Reference:

Shewchuk, M. (1983). Gold Fish in a Bowl. *Canadian Operating Room Nursing Journal*, 1 (1), p. 13-14.



Mary Knight, RN, BScN, MN, CPN(C), is President of the Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada. She is Project/Systems Coordinator, Adult OR, Health Sciences Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba.



Reusable vs. disposable—when it comes to diapers, you know what's best instinctively.

And the worries are pretty much the same even though it's not diapers we make but OR drapes and gowns.

How dependable is the barrier? Is it sanitary (where has it been before)? Are there worn spots or patches? Will it leak? How does it fit? Is there a good choice of sizes and styles?

Does it require special handling?

So, just as you already know what's best for baby at home, you know instinctively what's best for patients and staff in the OR.

Yet things can get cloudy if you let them. For example, reusable gown

and drape systems often seem more economical than they really are. People tend to forget the considerable costs of sorting and tracking inventory, replacing lost pieces and disrupting a controlled ordering, delivery and disposal system. Moreover, these hidden costs are very easily lost in a financial proposal.

That makes comparisons difficult, because, with single-use gowns and drapes, you always know *all* the costs up front.

Here's another example. You're likely to think single-use items are more harmful to the environment. After all, they consume more landfill space, and that concerns us, too, since the environment is something

we all care about. But the flip side is that reusable items result in more water pollution and make heavier demands on water supplies.

In fact, as far as their overall stress on the environment goes, surprisingly, single-use and reusable items are almost equal as the best evidence indicates.*

So whether it's baby diapers or OR drapes and gowns, be clear. You've always known what's best. You still do.

*Arthur D. Little, "Disposable Versus Reusable (Cloth) Diapers: Environmental, Health, and Economic Considerations," *Environmental, Health, and Safety Management*.

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