October marks the 39th anniversary of the national conference of the Professional Nurse Educators Group (PNEG). It is a result of forward thinking continuing education providers whose aim was to support and advance the field of professional development. They were early stewards of the profession. Their efforts resulted in the creation of The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing (JCEN).

As educators, we have a responsibility to nurture and support those who will come after us, those who will someday take our places. In the literature, this concept is discussed as “stewardship of the profession.” I like to think that PNEG has, in a small way, served as a catalyst for stewardship in the discipline of professional education. Those who attended past conferences had an opportunity to discover new tips and strategies and to expand their network of academic and professional development colleagues. I tend to think of national conferences such as this as a professional playground—a way to enjoy learning while exploring new concepts and ideas.

This year, three of the plenary sessions of the PNEG conference focus on themes that lead us into the future. Kristen Swanson, PhD, RN, FAAN, will present “Enhancing Nurses’ Capacity for Compassionate Caring: Creating Optimal Healing Environments in Nursing.” Bernadette Melynk, PhD, RN, CPNP/PMHNP, FNAP, FAAN, will present “Improving Health Care Quality and Patient Outcomes With Evidence-Based Practice and the ARCC Model.” Joseph Lucía, MA, MLS, will present “Remembering the Day After Tomorrow: Professional Transformation in an Era of Perpetual Change.”

In this issue of JCEN, four of our colleagues who were concurrent session presenters at last year’s PNEG conference are helping to steward the profession. They turned their presentations into manuscripts that were submitted for review by other professional development colleagues. The manuscripts were accepted for publication in this issue. All three topics guide us into the future. One examines the challenges ahead for continuing nursing education providers. One reports on the opportunities that journal clubs afford to the professional development nurses in a specialty organization—a creative model for others to follow. The third challenges us to go where we have never gone before relative to the use of technology.

I’d like to invite you to consider what you can do to steward the profession, to nurture and support those who are already in the pipeline as future nursing professional development specialists. Here are some of my ideas:

• Welcome and support new colleagues.
• Mentor a new or younger colleague. Share stories of the lessons you’ve learned with others as a way to spark their imaginations and remind them of what is important. Be a sage on the side by sharing the spotlight with others.
• If you are not already, become a lifelong learner.
• Serve as a role model by becoming certified or submitting an abstract for a conference.
• Join a new professional organization, group, commission, or board.
• Offer to chair a committee or head up a project.
• Encourage others to return to school or to volunteer for special projects or committees.
• Expand your expertise by attending a conference or delving more deeply into the literature in your specialty area.
• Take your presentations or projects to the next level by developing a poster or manuscript.
• Set a goal to try one new professional thing each year.
• Celebrate your successes.