

FRONT LINES



You. Are. ONA.

**OUR UNION UNVEILS A BOLD
BRAND RENEWAL WITH
MEMBERS AT ITS CENTRE**



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FRONTLINES

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ONA is the union representing 68,000 registered nurses and health-care professionals and more than 18,000 nursing student affiliates providing care in hospitals, long-term care facilities, public health, the community, clinics and industry.

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MESSAGE FROM YOUR BOARD

Welcome to the New ONA:

Badass and Unapologetic

The first thing you no doubt noticed about this issue of *Front Lines* is that it looks very different from what you're used to seeing. It's bold, brazen and, quite frankly, badass. Just like all of you.

And that's the whole point.

At our recent Biennial Convention, which you can read about on the next page, we unveiled our brand renewal, more than one year in the making. This is not just about logos, colours and fonts, although that's part of it. It's about a new attitude. It's about a stronger tone. It's about going where we have never ventured before to take control of our own fight. We are the nurses and health-care professionals of this province, the proud members of ONA, and we are tired, fed up and have a lot to say. More than ever, we need to fight, we need to be heard. This brand and its six principles will help us get there.

Because of that, we decided to produce this special edition of *Front Lines* that focuses largely on that brand, which was created based on what members throughout the province in all sectors said you wanted. Familiarize yourself with the brand and everything it entails because it

puts the focus right where it needs to be: on the grassroots members from which our union was born. You are reflected in every aspect.

It's not about "ONA" telling you what to do from our provincial or regional offices. You are ONA, and this brand is about empowering you. It's about Locals having their own identities and getting out there themselves. It's about making handmade signs, banners and placards from dollar store supplies. It's about plastering this province with our realities – and they aren't pretty – from the streets where you live and work. Our action is Local action, and the brand was designed to make that easy. The cover story and the Fight book included with this issue will show you how to make the fight local.

Like all changes, we understand the renewed brand will take some getting used to – we are feeling our way around too – but if we are truly to take back our power and the nobility that was once associated with our professions, we must embrace all it affords us now. ✨

LIRE EN FRANÇAIS À LA PAGE 11



KEY DECISIONS, CELEBRATIONS AT

It was a Biennial Convention like no other and by the time it was over, we had 50 years under our belt, amendments to our Constitution and a renewed sense of energy inspired by uplifting speakers and a refreshed brand.

The Biennial, held from November 7-9 at the Sheraton Centre Hotel in Toronto, began with a bang when ONA President Erin Ariss highlighted the founding of our union five decades ago – October 13, 1973 to be exact – by a group of “fierce and courageous nurses who were fed up” and ready to do something about it in a keynote address, livestreamed on Facebook, that received loud applause and many standing ovations (view at [youtube.com/ontarionurses](https://www.youtube.com/ontarionurses)).

And 50 years later, with all the challenges we currently face from government and employers, Ariss had a similar message – “we will continue to ramp up the pressure until we receive the respect and fairness we deserve” – before leading the room into a chant of “nurses and health workers under attack! What do we do? Show up, fight back!”

SO MUCH SOLIDARITY!

That kind of solidarity was reflected throughout the Biennial, with First Vice-President Angela Preocanin providing examples of notable wins in her portfolios of professional practice and political action, the result of Bargaining Units organizing members like never before, and CEO Andrea Kay emphasizing the strength of members and staff effectively collaborating in all service areas.

Even our guest speakers were onboard as Canadian women's hockey legend Hayley Wickenheiser revealed that as an overwhelmed new staff



physician, she learned “there is always a bigger health team to lean on” and Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions President Linda Silas urged delegates to “work together, get loud and take our concerns to politicians and decision-makers.”

Throughout the week, members were the focus, particularly during the regional Vice-President reports where five took to the stage to share their experiences with union involvement, the Hastings and Prince Edward County strike, the Toronto Caribbean Carnival, staffing challenges, and as an internationally educated nurse. During the rebrand presentation (see cover story), members signed the first-ever handmade ONA flag bearing our new

logo (see photo on page 3), which we plan to hang in the boardroom of ONA's provincial office.

There were also some very touching moments, most notably when late Chief Negotiator Steve Lobsinger was given a posthumous honorary ONA membership, accepted by his sister, ONA4 Local Coordinator Pam Lobsinger (above). Recent former ONA Presidents Vicki McKenna and Bernie Robinson received ONA President pins for their dedication to our union and were among those featured in past President and regional videos peppered throughout the Biennial.

Also in honour of our 50th anniversary, we featured a timeline

BIENNIAL CONVENTION



of our history in a break room set up theatre-style, showcased ONA memorabilia largely donated or loaned by members and held a Black and Gold Gala, where members celebrated all our impressive achievements.

BACK TO BUSINESS

Because the Biennial is a business meeting, along with updates on the work of our union over the past two

years, which you can read about in our bilingual Biennial Report (ona.org/2023-biennial-report), many key decisions were made by voting delegates to navigate our union through the years ahead. A total of 25 Constitutional Amendments passed, largely dealing with the addition of a Treasurer on the ONA Board of Directors, details around elections and a process for replacing/removing

a Board member. Two Statements of Belief amended parts of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion statement and introduced a commitment to integrate anti-racism and anti-oppression practices and principles to every level of ONA (details can be found in Constitutional Amendments and Resolutions Passed at ona.org/biennial).

Following a detailed report highlighting ONA's financial situation and a robust debate, four Resolutions on dues also passed, including the elimination of the three per cent escalator and an increase for 2024, 2025 and 2026. Your dues enable us to provide critical services and keep up the fight for ONA members and public health care. Learn all about dues at ona.org/dues.

To read more on the Biennial, including the Human Rights and Equity Caucus that kicked off the week and the education session that concluded it, read the Biennial Highlights at ona.org/biennial. ❁



You. Are. ONA.

OUR UNION UNVEILS A BOLD BRAND RENEWAL WITH MEMBERS AT ITS CENTRE



ONA has incorporated 50 years of history into a strikingly refreshed look and attitude that puts our members squarely at the forefront of our union.

As part of our five-year Strategic Plan launched in 2021, ONA spent the past year undergoing a brand renewal with the assistance of branding agency Stiff. Unlike anything we have ever undertaken before, the brand was revealed to delegates at the Biennial Convention on November 9 in a captivating presentation livestreamed on Facebook.

"We knew this process wouldn't be easy," said ONA President Erin Ariss. "You can't just slap a logo on something, change your colour palette and fonts, and call it a day. What would be the point?"

A good, solid brand needs to educate and empower members. It should change the way we operate, engage and communicate with members and the outside world. And that is a big job.”

HOW WE GOT HERE

While we went into this process open to possibilities, we knew one thing for sure: The wants and needs of our members had to be reflected in all aspects of the brand. We were crystal clear on that. And so, Stiff embarked on a series of focus groups and consultations with members from several classifications and varying-sized Bargaining Units across all ONA regions to get a clear picture of your realities. They also spoke to our Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Working Group, which provided information and considerations from this critical perspective.

“What we found out is not pretty,” explained Stiff CEO James Hanington. “Nurses are caring but not cared for, courageous but not unbreakable, necessary but not considered, loud but not heard, seen but not recognized, many but not enough, destroyed but not defeated.”

We also uncovered a disparity in how members were experiencing ONA based on factors such as location and level of involvement. And another theme that kept cropping up? The idea that nurses and health-care professionals are somehow viewed differently than male-dominated professions. Pipefitters and steelworkers, for example, are taken far more seriously yet don’t save lives. Stiff explored this further, discovering that after the industrial revolution when skilled workers were treated with less respect than the machinery they operated, they bonded together in community-based brotherhoods. While their employers may not have treated them well, they held their heads high and said it means something to be a pipefitter and a steelworker. In short, they brought nobility to their industry.

The nobility of ONA members, on the other hand, has been taken from us by governments and administrators who “stripped away our power, disrespected our training, diminished our credentials, silenced our objections and attempted to push us down to the point of breaking,” added Ariss. “As a result, we are angry. So, it’s time to fight like a nurse and prevail!”

ONE VOICE

The renewed brand is designed to help us do precisely that by returning to the grassroots from which ONA was born 50 years ago and from where we will grow for the next 50 years and beyond.

“ONA is where members can come together and not just be nurses or health-care professionals, titles, positions

or levels of authority, but a human, a sister, a brother, a sibling, a person who is going to fight for the person next to them to receive the rights, freedoms and benefits they deserve,” stated Ariss. “Our renewed identity gives every member in every health-care setting in Ontario the ability to speak with one voice and march with one look. ONA is where we meet to regain our nobility, reclaim the truth from governments and administrators, set the record straight and say we will never again be taken for granted. That collective action starts at the Local level and is what will bring changes to our workplaces. Local action is our action, and ONA is a platform for Local action.”

That concept is firmly ingrained in the six principles – beliefs members have in common that enable us to take back our power and fight – on which the brand is built, and reflected in our new corporate and street logos (see sidebars), handwritten-like fonts and five colours. But the look itself isn’t the priority of our brand. Giving Locals more prominence is. For that reason, the word “Local” has been omitted from our visuals to remove the distinction between our union’s structure and our grassroots membership. ONA

This is not a new brand; it's a long overdue reflection of our union and members.

OUR SIX PRINCIPLES

- 1. WE RESPECT OUR HISTORY.** *We were born of grassroots and we grow from those roots.*
- 2. WE CARE FOR THE BROKEN.** *Nurses mend patients. ONA mends nurses.*
- 3. WE DO NOT FEAR POWER.** *Governments. Administrators. The nurses are coming.*
- 4. WE LOVE FIERCELY.** *Injustice makes us angry. Anger makes us act.*
- 5. WE FIND STRENGTH IN EACH OTHER.** *Local action is our action.*
- 6. WE CHANGE THE PLACES WE GO.** *Settling is not an option for we are at stake.*



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Local 73, for example, becomes simply ONA73. We don't say ONA Central for the same reason. There is no ivory tower because we are one and the same, shaping an experience that is rooted in the shared identities and values of a working sisterhood, a word we use not as a gender, but as a political stance against gender discrimination, devaluation and the laws that have targeted female-dominated professions like ours.

USING THE BRAND

"The brand is a really a continuation of our history," noted Ariss. "Our protest signs have traditionally been handmade with big statements and bright colours. For the last 50 years what's been covered by the media are those signs and slogans made with the time we don't have for causes we shouldn't have to fight. But our goal is to show that it is our members who are in charge of your own fight, so we want every one of you to make your own flags, signs, placards, t-shirts – the list is endless."

In fact, the brand is explicitly designed to be replicated by hand. Each Local has their own identity and street logo and can choose from many combinations of colours and applications they feel best represents them within our ONA family. A key feature of the brand is its accessibility to all members. Materials needed to reproduce its look for a meeting, event or protest can easily be found at home (a good use for all the boxes you had delivered over the holidays!), your local dollar or thrift store, etc. For example, building off our principles, members can scrawl messages on unfolded cardboard boxes using a sharpie or paintbrush, and doing so together can build camaraderie. At the Biennial, leaders signed the first-ever handmade banner of our logo, made from a tablecloth – blue because that was the only colour available at the dollar store – a stencil from a well-used home printer and some leftover white paint.

The grand total of the flag, which will proudly hang in the boardroom at ONA's provincial office, was \$5.42. Its imperfection – a closer look reveals paint splatters and uneven edges – provides the extra impact we want when we're marching on the streets.

We have also created branded tape to symbolize that we're the ones left holding it together as our workplaces fall apart and our health-care system crumbles. We encourage you to use the tape to frame your signs, put up union memos, fix the spine of broken folders – whatever you want. Cover the surfaces around you and show governments and administrators that ONA is everywhere!

The tape was part of a Local action kit provided to leaders at the

Biennial Convention, filled with all the tools needed to equip members to fight. Also included in this issue of *Front Lines* is our Fight book, also known as your Individual Action Plan. It explains the brand in detail, contains useful tips on protesting and sign-making, other important resources, exercises and puzzles. Read this book, mark it up, make it yours.

"When you're having a bad day, turn to page 62 in that book and remember who you are," concluded Ariss. "You're badass even when you

cry. You're enough even when you're told you're not. You're heroic even if you feel invisible. You're appreciated even when you're taken for granted. You're indispensable even when you're thrown away. This is the right brand for us at the right time. It's every one of you. It's your Local and it's your ONA. So let's take back our nobility, tell the brutal truth to Ontarians about what governments and administrators have done to health care and our professions and fight back! Are you ready?" ❁



Members are urged to get creative and make your own signs using whatever material you have on hand, including cardboard boxes, or can find at your local dollar or thrift store. The tape provided to Locals and seen here completes the handmade, yet powerful look.





THE BRAND IN ACTION

It didn't take ONA7 long to put the renewed brand in action.

Just two weeks after the launch of our brand, the Local got to work ensuring it was fully reflected in their float for the Brantford Santa Claus parade on November 25. ONA7 Local Coordinator Melanie Holjak explains.

We wanted to incorporate ONA's new logo with a season appropriate look, and given the event was the Santa Claus parade, red and green were our chosen colours. We purchased a green tablecloth and a red curtain panel from a thrift store and painted the logo on the fabric.

Because we had a very short timeline to prepare our float and a lot of work to do, I was assigned this task by our Local Vice-Coordinator Allison McKellar, one of the float coordinators (the members at Brant Community Healthcare System organized the event). So, this first attempt at sign-making was a solo project, but I can see our ONA7 group making signs together at executive meetings.

The signs and float inspired so much pride and solidarity in our Local nurses and health-care professionals who participated. We all identified as ONA members, who were proud to walk together with the ONA7 banner. The crowd cheered and could be heard saying "thank you" and "the nurses are coming!" It felt like the community embraced us and truly appreciated the care and support we provide. It was both humbling and uplifting.

The coming together of ONA members across all sectors for this event was a fantastic team-building activity. We had hospital, community, public health, Victorian Order of Nurses, long-term care and health-care professionals walk together representing ONA7. It was such a positive way of promoting ONA to the community.

ABOUT THAT NEW LOGO

Actually, make that three new logos:

1. A corporate logo for formal applications and audiences that may not know ONA by our acronym.
2. A monogram (street) logo for informal materials and audiences that know us well.
3. Your Local identifier, which combines the monogram logo and your Local number.



The prongs that create the star-like shape of our logo, also available in French, represent our five regions. That's a deliberate choice, as ONA lives in each of those regions with our members. We're not defined by the provincial office in Toronto. The logo also symbolizes the care members provide to patients and each other across all levels of our union.

As well, a logomark (a symbol used in place of our name) celebrates the strength and diversity of members who stand together, united by a common cause.



MESSAGE DE VOTRE CONSEIL

Bienvenue à la nouvelle AIO : résolue et sans concession

La première chose que vous avez sans doute remarquée au sujet de ce numéro de *Front Lines*, c'est qu'il semble très différent de ce que vous avez l'habitude de voir. C'est audacieux, sans gêne, et bien franchement, déterminé. Comme vous tous.

Et c'est là toute la question.

Lors de notre récent congrès biennal, dont il est question à la page suivante, nous avons dévoilé le renouvellement de notre marque, qui est en préparation depuis plus d'un an. Il ne s'agit pas seulement de logos, de couleurs et de polices de caractères, même si cela en fait partie. Il s'agit d'une nouvelle attitude. Il est question de ton plus fort. Il s'agit d'aller là où nous ne nous sommes jamais aventurés auparavant pour prendre le contrôle de notre propre combat. Nous sommes les infirmières et infirmiers et les professionnels de la santé de cette province, les fiers membres de l'AIO, et nous sommes fatigués, nous en avons assez et nous avons beaucoup à dire. Plus que jamais, nous devons nous battre, nous devons être entendus. Cette marque et ses six principes nous aideront à y parvenir.

C'est pour cette raison que nous avons décidé de produire cette édition spéciale de *Front Lines*, qui porte principalement sur cette marque, qui a été créée en fonction de ce que les membres de tous les secteurs de la province ont dit vouloir. Familiarisez-vous avec la marque et tout ce qu'elle comporte parce qu'elle met l'accent là où il faut, c'est-à-dire sur les membres de la base d'où est né notre syndicat. Vous êtes reflétés dans tous les aspects.

Il ne s'agit pas pour l'« AIO » de vous dire quoi faire à partir de nos bureaux provinciaux ou régionaux. Vous êtes l'AIO, et cette marque a pour but de vous donner des moyens d'agir. Il s'agit pour les sections locales d'avoir leur propre identité et d'aller sur le terrain elles-mêmes. Il s'agit de fabriquer à la main des affiches, des bannières et des pancartes avec des fournitures de magasins à un dollar. Il s'agit de placarder des affiches d'un bout à l'autre de cette province pour faire connaître nos réalités – qui ne sont pas belles – dans les rues où vous vivez et travaillez. Notre action est une action locale, et la marque a été conçue pour faciliter cela. L'article de couverture et le livre de lutte inclus dans ce numéro vous montreront comment lutter à l'échelle locale.

Comme pour tous les changements, nous comprenons qu'il faudra s'habituer à la nouvelle image de marque – nous nous y habituons aussi – mais si nous voulons vraiment reprendre notre pouvoir et la noblesse qui était autrefois associée à nos professions, nous devons embrasser tout ce qu'elle nous offre maintenant. ❁



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“You hold yourself to a certain standard and when you can’t deliver that, you end up getting burnt out.”



Nurses talk truth.



How many nurses need to quit?

Ontario is experiencing the worst nursing shortage in its history, a crisis that the Ford government has failed to handle. Among the many causes, one in particular stands out - chronic short staffing throughout the health-care system. Short staffing means fewer nurses are having to take care of more and more patients, and that's dangerous. It means patients often don't get the timely care they deserve, while nurses suffer moral distress, exhaustion, and burnout. No wonder they've been leaving their jobs and, in many cases, the nursing profession altogether. How many nurses need to quit for this government to wake up?



NursesTalkTruth.ca