

**LETTERS
POLICY**

The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

Letters to the Editor,
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OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Common sense at work

Re: *Rush to go green bypassed common sense, letter to the editor by S. Rizzo, Aug. 15.*

It is unfortunate and unproductive to interpret any environmental program, such as the new hydro billing plan involving smart meters and time-of-use pricing, as yet another 'cash grab' from the pockets of the 'lowly public'.

We enjoy one of the highest standards of living and yet we pay a fraction of the cost. Not surprisingly, we consume more and waste more, than virtually any other nation. Look beyond our privileged bubble and see if our governments are really so corrupt.

As well, to suggest this hydro conservation program is better suited to the 1950s and '60s is absurd: these decades helped lay the groundwork for the unsustainable consumerist lifestyle at the heart of current environmental crises.

This new billing plan may mean slightly higher costs and minimally lower consumption. But its most significant impact is the implicit message that cheap

energy, with no limits or consequences, is an outdated illusion.

This is common sense, not a cash grab.

MYLES O'BRIEN
STOUFFVILLE

It will be Lebovic Ice Palace

Re: *Town seeks name for ice rink, Aug. 20.*

I had to laugh at the headline on the front page.

We all know that it has already been decided. It will be known as The Lebovic Ice Palace.

And, as I said once before, we'll soon be known as "Whitchurch-Lebovicville", and council will be known as The New Royal Canadian Air Farce.

T. ARTHUR ARNOTT
STOUFFVILLE

WHAT NAME WOULD YOU PUT ON ARENA?

▶ What name would you put on the new Weldon Road rinks? E-mail your suggestions to to jmason@yrmg.com



For average kid, summer never lasts long enough

Well guys, looks like it's back to school pretty soon," I said at home the other night, which to my sons is the kind of talk that could get a dad fired, or at least roughed up a little bit.

School? It's still August and to them school is a four-letter word, give or take a letter here or there.

It's as if I should bleep that word out of my column, in case one of them happens to be reading.

We drive by the sch***, Summitview Public, sometimes and my youngest yells, "Don't look!" and covers his eyes.

Perhaps if he lays eyes on the red-brick building he might be turned into a pile of chalk dust, is his theory.

I don't doubt that he likes school as much as the next 11-year-old boy. He just needs a break sometimes.

My older son, meanwhile, is off to high school for the first time.

He doesn't seem at all nervous about it, but maybe he just won't admit it.

I must admit Grade 9 for me seems like quite a long time ago.

I do remember feeling like a shrimp, compared to the rest of the student body. And I felt a little lost.

I had gone to Catholic grade school but opted for the public high school, which was a 10-minute walk from my house rather than an early-morning bus ride to the all-boys Catholic high



Bernie O'Neill

school on the other side of town. It meant making a lot of new friends. Some of those friends are still friends today.

I just hope my son picks the right friends and hangs on to the other friends he already has who will join him at their new high school.

Speaking of "new" high schools, were you aware that most of the new high schools built by the public board in recent years in York Region have the exact same design?

Enter Bur Oak Secondary in Markham one day and Stouffville District the next and it's deja vu all over again. The school office, the gym, the cafeteria are all in the exact same spot.

Which at first kind of shocked and even saddened me — where's the creativity, the grand architecture? — until I realized they probably save one heck

of a lot of money by relying on one set of drawings rather than starting from scratch each and every time.

I hear it's done with new grade schools as well.

I know things have changed a lot since I was in high school.

For one thing there is no longer a Grade 13.

We would "graduate" from Grade 12, with a graduation ceremony, suit and gown and the whole nine yards, only to turn around and see most of us graduate all over again from Grade 13 the next June.

It did seem kind of silly. And when you realize most jurisdictions in North America had done away with that level of high school, maybe it was time for Ontario to erase Grade 13 as well.

Lately, though, I hear of many young people who finish Grade 12 but come back for another year of high school anyway.

You might hear it referred to as a "victory lap", almost something derogatory. But my sense is that many are trying to improve their grades, or they're working trying to save up money for college or university, or they are heavily involved in high school sports and may even be gunning for a scholarship of some kind by returning to high school for another semester or two.

Or they haven't decided what they want to do as a career and don't want

to waste money on post-secondary tuition if they're not certain.

Or they and their parents simply realize they are still not mature enough to be going off to school somewhere possibly far from home.

I don't mean to sound like a cynical parent, but you sometimes get the idea with all the vacations and PA days that they aren't in school that much anyway, so maybe taking another semester is a good thing.

This year, because of a late Labour Day, school is not starting until Sept. 8, at least for the students in the York public board. The teachers appear to be back at work the week before but they are in part on PA days.

That's not the case in all boards in Ontario, with many students back in school on Sept. 1 before heading into a long Labour Day weekend.

It might make you wonder if our kids are getting shortchanged.

From what I can tell, the board is still offering the legal minimum number of instructional days in a school year. So perhaps it evens out in the end.

Meanwhile, the kids themselves are probably quite content to see school start as late as possible, as much as they really miss it deep down.

Summer can never last long enough.

Stouffville resident Bernie O'Neill is a York Region Media Group editor.