

**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.

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OPINION

EDITORIAL

Be active in remembering

At this time each year, poppies bloom on every lapel. Unfortunately, many people have become inured to the symbol and its meaning.

Created to mark their sacrifices made for freedom, Remembrance Day should be a solemn day when we take time to honour those who died or gave of themselves for this country and future generations.

Rather than observing a perfunctory moment of silence, we need to find active ways to remind us of the World Wars' victory over evil.

A memory dies without ritual; its meaning is lost without dedicated action.

We must imagine what it was like for a 19-year-old soldier dodging snipers on Nazi territory, never having killed before, but aiming his rifle bravely.

We must imagine those infantry soldiers who first peered through the gates of numerous death camps just after the Allies liberated them.

Remembrance Day must be marked by our words and actions. The least we can do is commemorate the souls who sacrificed for us.

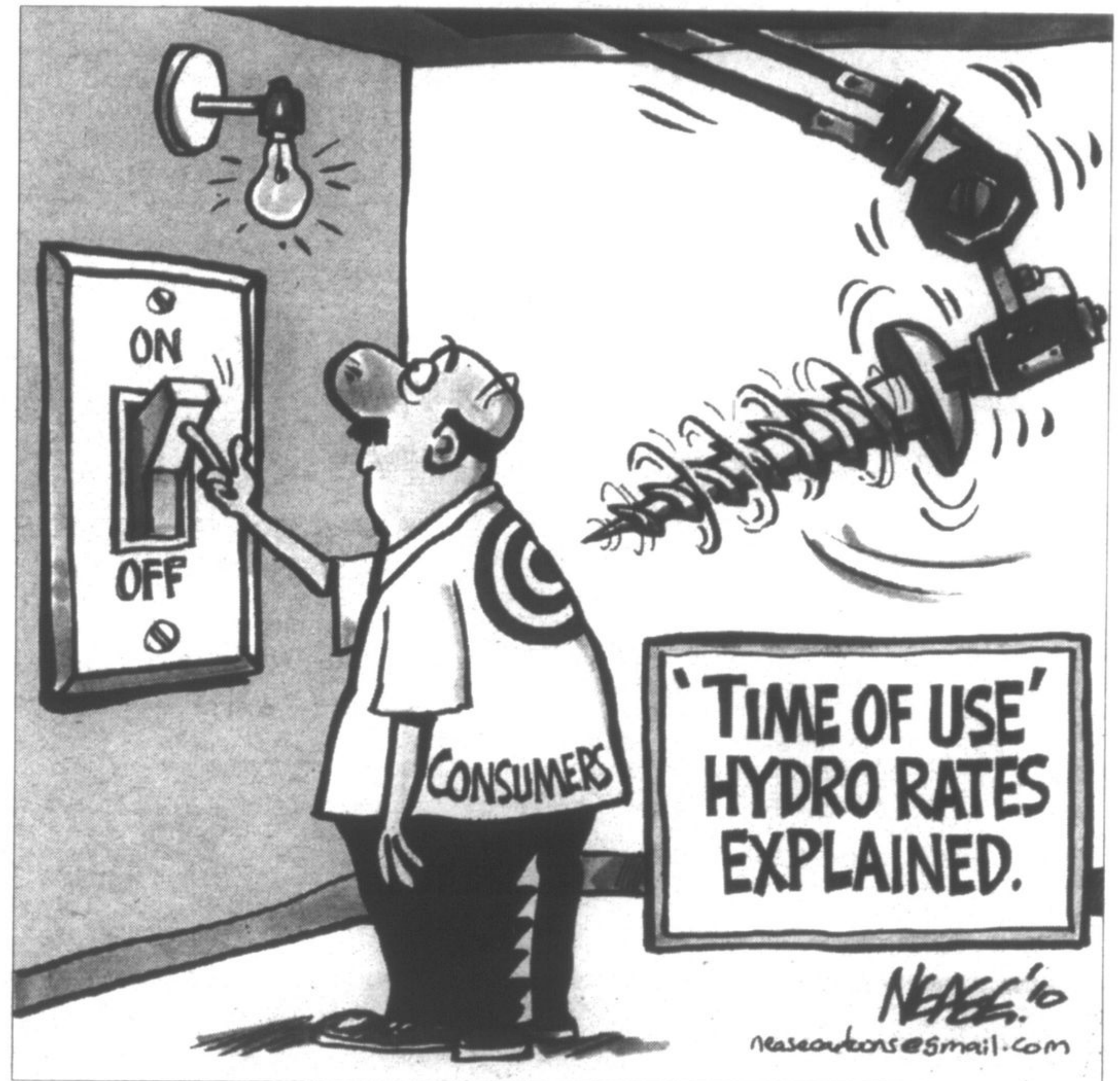
How we express our appreciation is as much for us — as this generation — four generations removed.

Remembrance Day should be at least as important as Thanksgiving, where we fill our tables and our bellies while offering thanks. It should be at least as important to our nation as Canada Day, Victoria Day and Labour Day — when we celebrate in happier ways.

One way to perpetuate remembrance is to talk to a veteran or have them share their memories and experiences.

Invite a speaker to your group or ask a great uncle to describe his war years to your family.

Attend ceremonies with co-workers or family members. Your actions remind others you offer tribute to the memory of those who sacrificed.



Even financially stretched can help United Way

Are you a little stretched financially? Juggling bills with mortgage or car payments? Saying no to worthy charities asking for money because you don't have enough for your family?

Well, me, too.

But I made one important exception — for my annual United Way of York Region donation.

We all know it's easy to give to charity when you have money. What's not so easy is giving when you don't.

A good friend of mine made a donation to the Canadian Red Cross during the Haiti earthquake appeal even though she was having trouble paying bills herself.

Part of me admired her courage and commitment, a little part of me thought she should take care of herself first.

Now I'm in a similar situation.

This year is my first as a parent having two students attending post-secondary school at once.

My daughter is in fourth year at Western, my son in first year at Georgian



Marney Beck

College.

Can we say E-X-P-E-N-S-I-V-E?

When my husband and I add our daughter's off-campus rent and food to her tuition and books, plus our son's residence, meal plan, tuition and books, the total is frightening.

Frankly, it's in negative territory as far

as my bank balance is concerned.

For the first time in many years, I'm juggling bills, not paying off my VISA each month and thankful we have a line of credit to draw upon.

Now, lest you feel terribly sorry for me, I should explain my children are extremely lucky their grandfather — my generous dad — established education savings plans for all five of his grandchildren.

My brother and I thank our lucky stars we have this money for our children's higher education.

Because of their grandfather's foresight and belief in the value of a good education, my two offspring so far have no student debt and can pursue the education they wish.

But back to bills and bank balances.

This year I'd have the perfect excuse to simply recycle the annual letter from the United Way of York Region asking for my support.

In all truth, I could tell myself, "I don't even have money to pay my own bills — I can't afford to help other families this year."

But two things stopped me.

One is that this has become a habit

for me.

Supporting the United Way and my local hospital are two things I take seriously and do year after year.

Second, I know deep in my heart I'm far better off than many and it's my social duty to give to those even more stretched financially than I am.

So, if you're in my shoes, if you're agreeing you can't donate to the United Way campaign this year, here are a few questions I asked myself that may resonate with you:

- Is my fridge full of food? Yes;
- Can I afford to fill the car with gas when it's empty? Yes;
- Can we meet most bills to keep a roof over our heads? Yes;
- Will we be able to pay my son's winter tuition instalment? Yes, somehow;
- So to the United Way's donation request, can I help families struggling even more than I? Yes.

Marney Beck is an editor with the York Region Media Group.