

**Stouffville Sun-Tribune**

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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

**Stouffville Sun-Tribune**

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Why stop at Santa?

*Re: Santa setting bad example? Letter to the editor by Barbara Brass Duncan, Nov. 25.*

So, Santa is an overweight, ex-smoking glutton, who has no regard for the law?

Perhaps our children should look up to Ebenezer Scrooge. He has maintained his slim physique, abides by the law and makes no promises.

He is straight forward and no hopes are dashed as he gives no one hope.

Imagine, our gullible children believing in a jolly, loving, giving being!

Over the years, I, too, should blame old Saint Nick for a few of my bad behaviors.

When I speed, it's Santa's fault. When I break the law, it's Santa's fault.

When I overindulge, Santa is to blame.

There are a few others I would like to point the finger at. For one, the Easter Bunny, who could lose a few pounds

himself. Where does he get off leaving chocolate eggs for the kids and hiding them in a malicious manner, which could be construed as devious?

And then there's that Tooth Fairy (perhaps a little too thin?) leaving money to our children for their teeth? What's next? Will the kids think an appendix or tonsils will bring them a better rate of return?

I hope Ms Duncan was pulling our leg because a world of not believing is a world in which no child wants to be.

Perhaps her letter should have just stated Mr. Scrooge's catchphrase; "Bah, humbug!" which is used to express disgust with many of the modern Christmas traditions.

Let's see how many people come to see that deceitful, grossly overweight lawbreaker at his parade today.

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and to all a good night.

**ANNA BRIONES**  
STOUFFVILLE



## Time-of-use billing like reading hydro-glyphics

**I**s your head spinning, not unlike the spin cycle on your washing machine, when you try to wrap your head around what's going on with your hydro bill today and in the future?

I had been worrying lately about how I was going to pay for my two sons to go to university, with the oldest just a few years from post-secondary partying, er, rather, studies.

Now I'm thinking I should be saving up to pay for power for the coffee maker, TV and washing machine.

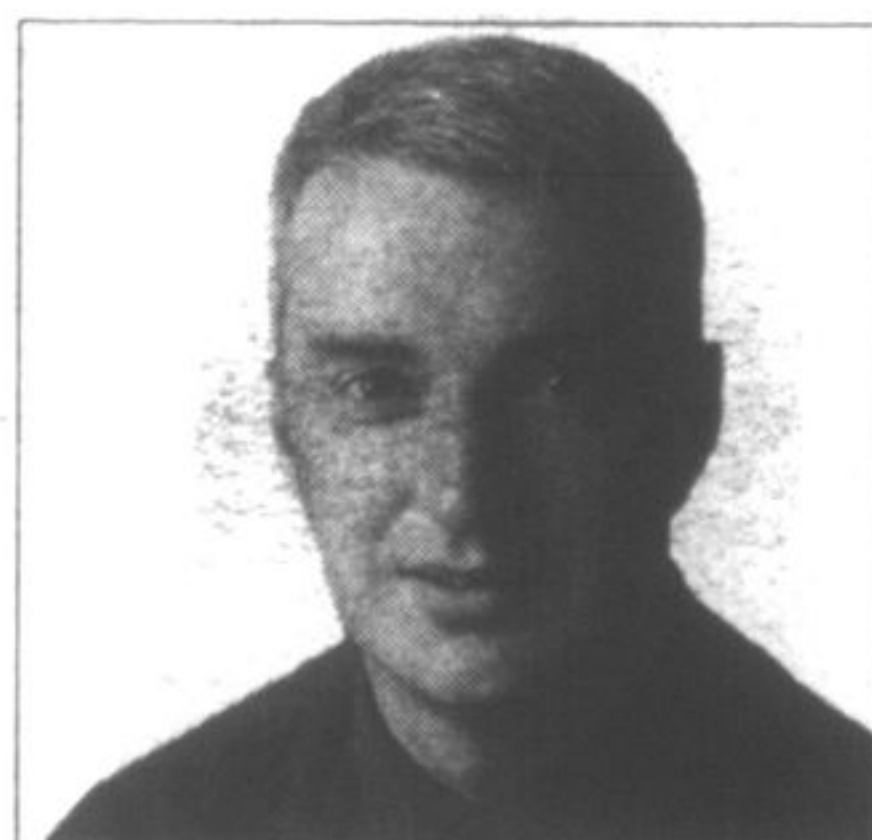
We'll have electricity to check the weather forecast on TV, get his McDonald's uniform washed and dried and keep his alarm clock beeping.

He can get up early to serve Egg McMuffins or the breakfast burrito, or whatever it is power utility executives are eating on the run these days.

And, of course, we'll be up at midnight washing that uniform, so we can take advantage of the off-peak hydro rate, which I'm sure, once you consult a certified chartered accountant, notary public or someone with a McGill MBA, will be reflected in your hydro bill, somehow, somewhere, some way.

You may need to take a day off once a month to read your hydro bill so you can understand why it has gone up so much. I'm sure the details are in there.

Keep in mind if you have a so-called



**Bernie O'Neill**

smart meter for time-of-use billing, there is a summer and winter rate and a mid-peak, on-peak and off-peak rate, plus a weekend-and-holiday rate, which is the same as the off-peak rate.

In the summer, you get the mid-peak rate in the morning but the on-peak rate in the afternoon.

But in the winter, you get the mid-peak rate in the afternoon and the on-peak rate in the morning.

In the winter, you get the on-peak rate in the evening but in summer, you get the mid-peak rate in the evening.

At night, when you're asleep, you get to take advantage of the off-peak rate.

This is all perfectly clear up to this point, correct? Meanwhile, rates are expected to double in the coming years, the province assures us, in part

so we can pay many times the going rate for wind and solar power and cover the costs of the mistakes of the past.

Which is why the time for the off-peak rate is being expanded and you will eventually be able to wash the breakfast dishes at 7 p.m. instead of 9 p.m. and still get the best rate.

The change seems designed to make us feel better about our mysterious and ever expanding hydro bills, which, you might say, are a little like reading hydro-glyphics.

If you're a PowerStream customer, there's the customer service charge, the distribution charge, the network service charge, the line and transformation service charge, the wholesale market service charge, the special purpose charge, the standard supply service charge and debt retirement service charges.

The upshot of all this? If at all possible, you should only wash your clothes in summer and at night. Other than that, your best bet is to wear dirty clothes or throw them out and buy new ones.

Cook meals at night, use power tools at night, vacuum at night, use the electric lawn mower at night and so on. It's easy and environmentally friendly!

Some might say they can understand all this, that it's like paying less for late-night ice time (off-puck rate), a less tasty cut of meat (off-pork rate), leaving your car in a lot way, way far from the Rog-

ers Centre (off-park rate) or washing whites and reds in the same load to save money (off-pink rate). You do your thing outside of prime time or prime conditions and save money. Correct?

Still, I'm not convinced.

For the most part the power is there, generated by nuclear power plants and water running over dams (hence the word hydro). It's humming through the power lines all day long as we go to work and "use" tonnes of power. It's also there at night, even as we sleep, and "use" very little.

A downtown office tower that leaves its lights on all night does nothing more than pay money to the hydro utility that it didn't need to pay. But it didn't "use up" any power that could have gone somewhere else the next day.

Our real challenge is to avoid brown-outs and blackouts at times of peak demand — the hottest days of summer, the coldest days of winter, so we can avoid building entire new nuclear power plants to meet our needs in early August or mid-January. That could be done with the new peaker plant.

Other than all that, we're for the most part jumping through hoops to try to lower our bills and if the utilities' revenues go down as a result, they just raise the prices on us anyway.

I'm sure they get a charge out of it, but I don't.