

## A hydro black hole?

I guess after living in the Schomberg/Lloydton area for the last 22 years I should accept that I live in a hydro black hole and cease getting angry and frustrated when we lose service so frequently for so many hours.

Recently we were hit yet again with an outage lasting close to 14 hours and I would wager that the outage was the result of a defective component in obsolete equipment. It's clear that we live with an infrastructure that is not worthy of a first world country. Yet again, businesses within the affected area were forced to close on the busiest retail day of the week with no recourse or compensation for the loss of business.

I would be more tolerant of the outages if I, like other Ontario residents, was not paying the highest electricity rates in Canada. My bill last month was a ridiculous \$852 and I have no doubt that the rates will continue to increase one way or another. The eight per cent Provincial Tax Rebate and Debt Retirement Charge Exemption barely make a dent.

Our esteemed premier assures us that her government is feeling our pain and will do everything within its power to ease the burden so that residents no longer have to forego eating in order to pay their hydro bills. I guess the pre-election posturing has begun for the governing party.

Saturday was an easy weather day, a slight breeze, no precipitation and the temperature well above zero. Why then were residents without heat and light and for many residents with wells, without water for up to 14 hours?

Did a downed tree result in the loss of power? This is a favourite excuse used by Hydro One when I have complained about outages in the past.

Or could it be due to the lack of preventative maintenance of the antiquated infrastructure in this neck of the woods? No, surely not, even though one very pleasant and sympathetic customer service representative once told me that the government does not allocate sufficient funding to maintain the system and that I should contact my MPP to complain. For some reason this made me angrier than being told a tale about a fallen tree.

The feeling I generally get in dealing with Hydro One is one of indifference, bordering on arrogance, for they know that most common folk have no choice but to put up with this lousy service. I only wish I had the resources to move off the grid and have my own electrical supply.

**Mike Shackleford**

Schomberg