

Anyone want a 'cheap' freezer?

As a rule, I try to be thrifty.
Of course, my kids say I'm just plain cheap, but cheap is such a nasty word.
I try to conserve energy whenever I can. I use cruise control when I'm driving long distances, and I turn off the lights whenever I leave the room. And the television is never left on if no one is watching it. I use a programmable thermostat all winter long and in doing so, have seen considerable savings in my heating bills.

So when I see a promotion that is supposed to save me money from an energy point of view, I take a second look. Such was the case last week as I attended Halton Hills Hydro's Summer Savings program kick-off barbecue. The purpose of the event was to make people aware of the ways one can conserve energy, more specifically electrical energy.

One display at the barbecue caught my eye. It was the Ontario Power Authority's (OPA) display for the 'Great Refrigerator Roundup,' in which the OPA sends out technicians to pick up those old basement refrigerators that are sucking up the hydro like a gigantic sponge.

The best part? They do it for free.
As I walked to the car after covering the event, I thought of the freezer in my basement.

It's a 21-cubic footer, works like a charm, and is still as cold as the Arctic on a balmy day.

And it's worked like that since it was installed in the basement—in 1964.

Yup, it ain't exactly a spring chicken.
Under the OPA guidelines, the freezers and refrigerators must be in running condition, accessible to the technicians and more than 10 years old, before they'll pick 'em up.

Since I didn't sign up on the spot, I went to their website to get more details.

Apparently, they take the old units back and disassemble them, extracting the old Freon gas, recycling many parts, and placing the remaining in landfill. When they are finished recycling and

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reclaiming the material, they claim all that's left for the landfill "will just about fit inside a cowboy hat."

According to the stats on the website, that old freezer is costing me about \$150 a year more than a new energy-efficient one.

And I sure don't need a 21-cubic foot freezer to hold that extra box of M&M's chicken breasts when they are on sale.

I connected to the website to apply for a pick up. My only disappointment was the website was a bit confusing, so I 'think' I applied, but when I called the 1-800 number, and waited for 30 minutes for an operator, I'm still not sure—I hung up.

Regardless, I'm going to pursue the program, and let OPA take the old freezer and transport it to that big chill in the sky.

And in the process, I'll save \$150 bucks.
I thought about that figure—if it's been costing me \$150 a year, and it's been there for 43 years, even if I take the last 10 years at \$150, that amounts to \$1,500 that I've spent on hydro that was wasted.

And when those new 'little' freezers sell for less than \$300—well you can do the math.

The next thing I've gotta do is to take a hard look at the beer fridge.

But that one is sooooo close to my heart.

(Ted Brown can be reached at tbrown@independentfreepress.com)

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