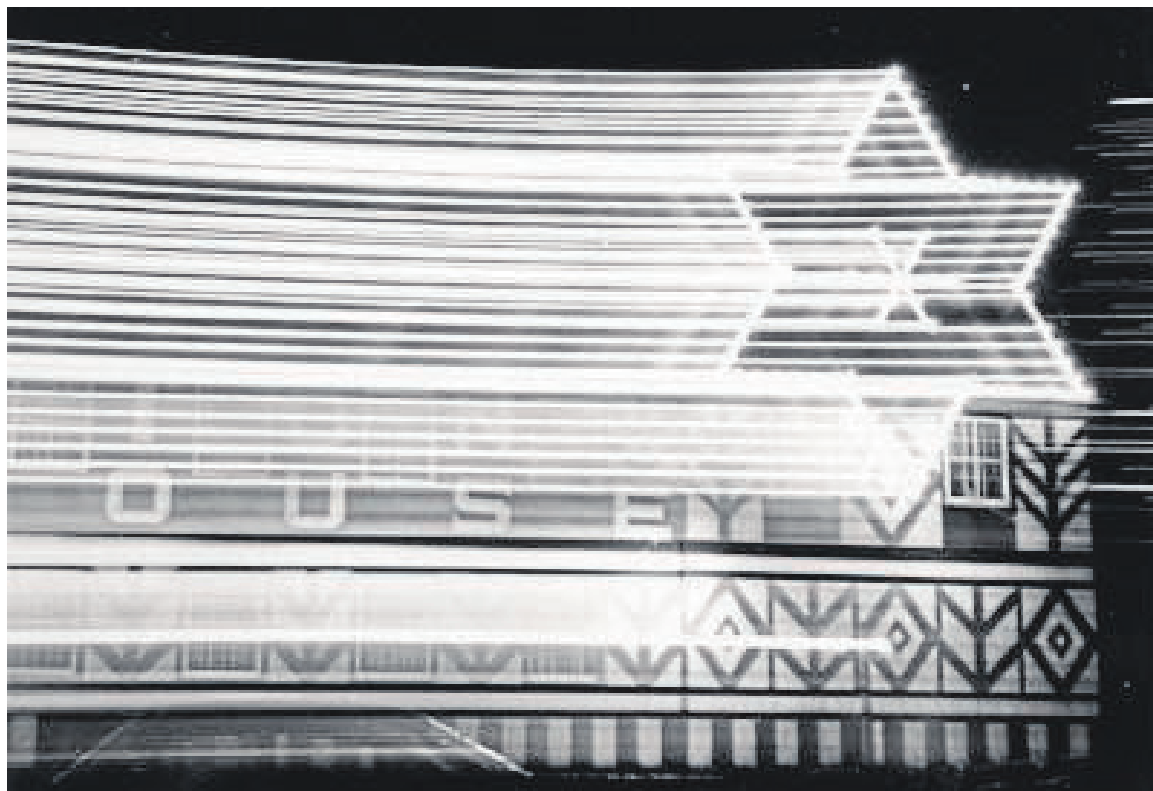


THE WAY WE WERE

This 1963 photo shows the 'Shooting Star' Christmas light display at the old Dominion Seed House on Guelph Street. The Dominion Seed House was demolished in 1999.

EHS photo



OPINION

WHAT'S STORED IN YOUR 'BRAIN ATTIC FILING CABINET?'

NO SPACE LEFT UP THERE, WRITES TED BROWN



TED BROWN
Column

damned if you remember the name of that person you've just spoken to!

To make it worse, that person's name conveniently pops up in your brain about an hour or so later.

I've researched a bit about memory loss from time to time, especially where and when it happens.

I've forgotten most of it (just kidding), but most comments I've read all seem to agree with one thing, becoming forgetful is an aging thing. When we pass that 50 year or so milestone, it's gonna happen.

And I'm OK with that - I'm certain we all have lots of things out there that we'd gladly forget!

Consequently, I've concluded that our brains have simply run out of storage

space.

Years ago, I read *A Study in Scarlet*, a Sherlock Holmes mystery written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

In the story, Sherlock Holmes' friend Dr. Watson is flabbergasted that Holmes doesn't know anything about the solar system, and he is even more surprised when Holmes also states that, moving forward, he will do his utmost to forget that knowledge he just acquired.

Holmes explains, "A man's brain is like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture as you choose. A fool takes in all the lumber of every sort that he comes across, so that which might be useful to him gets crowded out or is jumbled up with a lot of oth-

er things, so that he has difficulty in laying his hands upon it."

Holmes concluded with: "The skilful workman is very careful as to what he takes into his brain-attic. He will have nothing but the tools which may help him in doing his work."

I really think Sherlock Holmes was on to something here.

Bringing that same analogy to present day, one could compare our brains to a computer hard drive and overloading it with useless data achieves the same effect - the brain's ability to quickly retrieve facts is slowed down dramatically.

Today we call it "information overload."

Think about our lifestyles of today. We have umpteen passwords to remember, all accessing con-

fidential info - bank records, automobiles, home security, email, communications, and entertainment - and then to top it off, we're told that, in the interest of cybersecurity, we should change those passwords every six or eight weeks.

Geez, just take a moment to think of how much "stuff" we have to remember.

By the time I reach the end of that six- to eight-week period after I've changed my passwords, I'm just nicely beginning to remember the new passwords and then, that annoying notice once again arrives in my inbox telling me that "it's time to change that password" again.

It's not rocket science that we can't remember the damn name of that someone walking through the mall - our brains have simply run out of space to file

that name in the top drawer of our brain files marked "names and faces." We're forced to dig a whole lot deeper into the lower drawers in our imaginary filing cabinet to find the name.

So, what's stored in your imaginary brain attic filing cabinet?

Well, in my case, it's right on the tip of my tongue ...

Can you give me a few minutes?

Ted Brown is a freelance journalist for the IFP. He can be reached at ted-bit@hotmail.com.

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