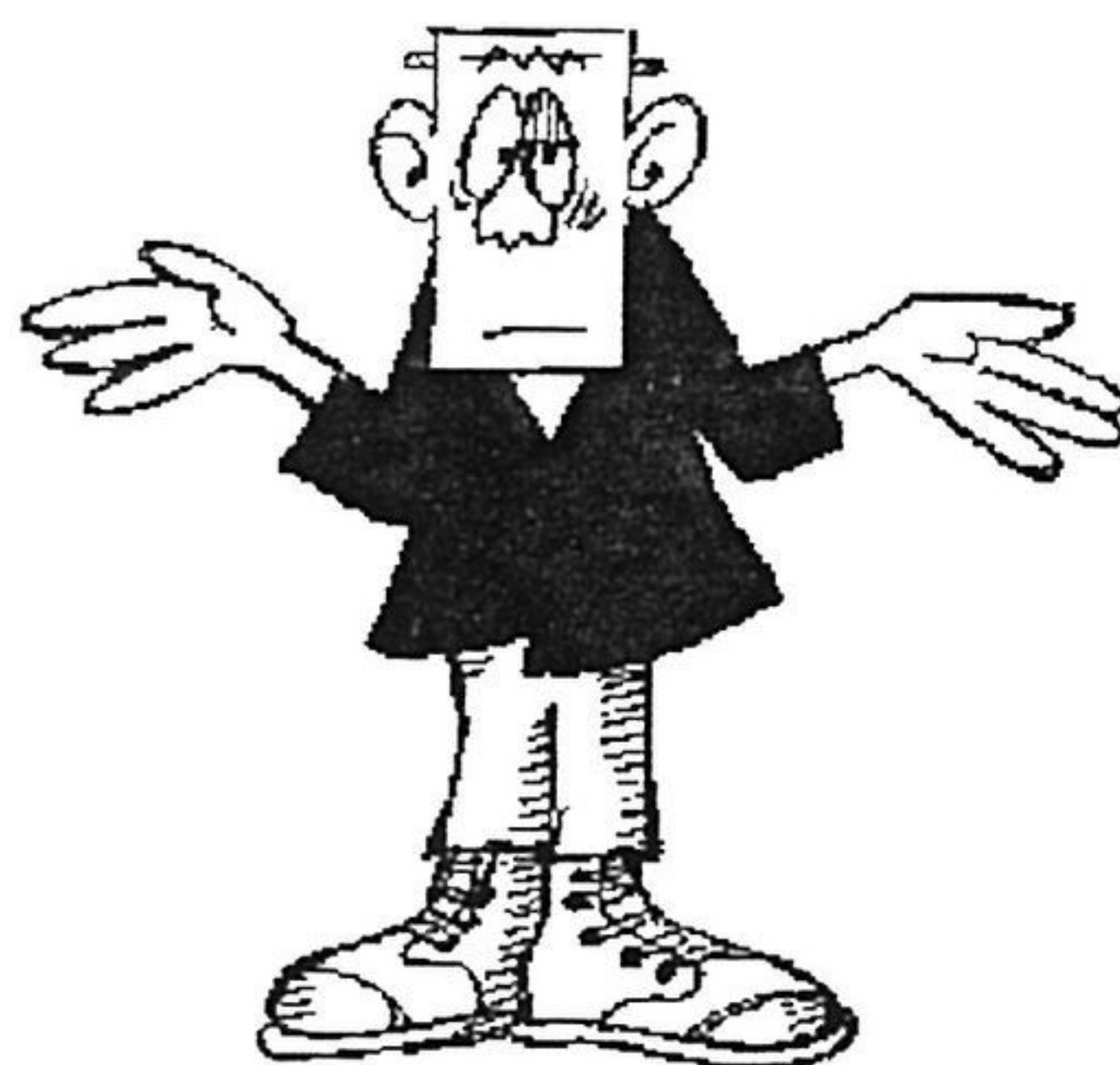


I KNOW YOU, YOUR NAME IS.....

There's an expression, "I have an excellent memory, but it's only good for five minutes". I fall into that lousy memory category, the only solace being that I know I'm not alone. There are people on the seminar circuit, presenting day-long seminars on how to remember names, and that's enough to convince me that there's many of us who suffer from this embarrassing failing. I attended a demonstration once, where the instructor rattled off the names of over thirty people he'd chatted with before the lecture started, and while I was mightily impressed, the skill was as unfathomable to me as Siegfried and Roy making six tigers disappear. I heard one theory proposed that we fail to remember names because we're so anxious to make an impression, that we just don't try.

Well, I try. After being introduced to a stranger and immediately forgetting the name, I've taken to asking the name again and repeating it in an attempt to get that name to settle somewhere in my memory bank. It hasn't helped.



I've tried "association" techniques. When introduced to Ralph Barker, for example, I'll try and picture a dog Barking "Ralph, Ralph." For Clifford Walker I try to picture a man Walking off a Cliff. Well, this really doesn't work for me because I can't think fast enough.

I'm introduced, conversation commences, and there's no time to dredge up some kind of a picture. Besides, most names don't seem to lend themselves to this technique. Looking at the index of a magazine beside me as I write, I see the names Donna Zaica, Judith Timson and Doug Gilmour.

These names don't cause associative pictures to leap to mind.

A friend, Jim, who suffers this same affliction swore to me that he was never again going to have to suffer through a conversation where he had to reference the person as "Big Fella" or "Pal", because he'd forgotten the name. He vowed the next time he met someone whose name he should remember, he would flat out admit that he had forgotten the name and eat his little embarrassment cookie right then and there. So he did. Walking through Place Ville Marie, a well dressed businessman hailed, "Jim!", and my friend walked directly to this familiar stranger, shook his hand with a manly grip, stating, "Good to

see you, but I have to admit your name has slipped my mind".

The startled gentleman replied, "I'm not surprised, we've never met and I wasn't talking to you." Jim bumbles along



with the rest of us now, lacking the courage to try his technique a second time.

Forgetting names isn't nearly as bad as remembering a name, but applying it to the wrong person. Only last week, I addressed a man as "Al" numerous times. There was an "Al" there all right, but not the guy I was calling "Al". His name was Jack. When my wife finally managed to shut me up and take me aside to correct me, she called me a "cluck". I answer to that name nowadays.

Maybe because I lack so many social graces myself, I delight in the awkwardness of others. It's not nice, not admirable, but I do. Walking through the parking lot to the Quinte Mall, a man walking toward me, some fifty feet away, suddenly crouched into a boxer's pose, began jabbing and punching the air, and as we closed the gap to within a few feet,