

The beginning of the New Year is usually the time when we reflect upon the events of the previous year, at least the ones we can remember. Although our memory can be persistent, it can also be persistently unpredictable. Sometimes it seems that the harder you try to remember something the further it slips away. And our ability to recall information often seems to have an inverse relation to the importance of having to do so. So we can all remember some pretty useless trivia while watching Jeopardy, but then in front of a large crowd of people the name of someone we have known for 40 years eludes us.

When the name of someone like... Oh, I don't know.... one of our kids, escapes us, we always have the option of referring to them as son, honey, sweetie or some other handy generic name. Yes, I know it's rude, but when you're in a tight spot and no one will throw you a rope you will grab hold of just about anything. This was my Dad's method of dealing with a forgotten name.

Once at the "Flea Market Wine Tasting" (no... I'm not kidding) my father was approached by a friendly fellow that knew him and struck up a conversation over a plastic cup of his homemade strawberry, apple and bacon/mulberry sort of wine (it was a blend?). Dad had no idea who the fellow was and as they wrapped up their conversation and the last of the wine Dad patted him on the back, turned to go and said, "Well, See you later buddy!" The guy smiled as my father walked away and then turned to me shaking his head. "Your Dad is amazing! I haven't seen him in years and he still knows my name!" I started to give Buddy the bad news, but it seemed like a good time for me to just nod and take another sip. After all, if both Buddy and my Dad were happy, why ruin it for them.

For some reason complex memories like this one about our family and friends from years past can last a lifetime. But the everyday things in life like names, dates, or where we parked and why we came to the darned store in the first place can easily avoid us. Unless you're one of those people that puts a tennis ball on your antenna or that just pays attention. The rest of us end up having to pretend that we are just out for a casual walk in the grocery store parking lot.

And if you can remember the name of kid who sat in front of you in the first grade 50 years ago but you can't figure out why you are in the front yard with the TV remote in your hand, don't feel bad...old "what's his name" next door is probably having the same problem. So to all of you "May auld acquaintance be forgot and ..." umm...well anyway, Happy New Year!