

## Spaced It Out

*By Pete Clark*

I have always had an excellent memory with the ability to store and recall trivial facts about a plethora of items and ideas, with the exception of music and sports in which I have little to no interest. During the last year or so, it has become apparent that this ability is going away. I hope it does not disappear completely, as it has always been a piece of who I am. In the military, with its affinity for acronyms, I was known as the EUI, the Encyclopedia of Useless Information.

Early in life, I discovered a potentially harmful problem with my memory. There are times when I will finish a job later, make a phone call or go somewhere in the near future, like in an hour or tomorrow. When the time for action comes, the thought doesn't appear and I go blithely on with another task. The thought may never reappear, unless I am reminded by something, or I wonder why something did not get done. Most of the time, something not happening makes no difference at all, but sometimes it can be devastating.

For many years I worked for a big box retail firm. I began learning the trade as an Assistant Division Manager in charge of hardware and lighting. Figuring out what items would be good for sales promotions was a part of my job that I thoroughly enjoyed. One promotion I set up raised hackles throughout the store. Spring was well on its way, so I bought enough GE Bug Lights to fill an end. Once the end was setup, everyone from the janitors to the General Manager ragged on me about how stupid the idea was. The following Monday, when the end of Bug Lights was sold out, the General Manager boasted about his great idea.

Years later, I held the position of Division Three Manager at the same store, with a different General Manager. At one point, a big sale was to begin for the Hosiery Department the next day and I had worked into the early hours of the morning, long after my help had gone home, pricing hundreds of packages of pantyhose on the counter tops and in the understocks. I was able to go home for a while and then go back into the store at seven that morning to put up sale signs and do a final check before the store opened. When I arrived at the store, a curtain had dropped into place, blocking the memory of a hard day's and night's work and the need for the placement of signs. Later I was paged to Hosiery and reamed out. I deserved that. Later in the month the general manager caught me in Hosiery and stood there with his hands behind his back. He flipped a hand out with my check in it, then he pulled it back and put it forward again. I stood there too tired to play games. I worked seventy to ninety hours per week and I knew my tenure with the outfit was coming to an end.