Brad Christian

Computers At The Mines

I never realized how interesting my uncle Dan Christian's

job was until I interviewed him about his job at Cleveland Cliffs

Iron Company.

Dan Christian was born to Emma and Arthur Christian in

Ishpeming, Michigan, on August 21, 1943. Dan grew up in

Ishpeming with his brother Dave where they graduated from

Ishpeming High School.

After high school Dan attended the University of Minnesota

for his freshman year. After his freshman year Dan transferred

to Northern Michigan University where he earned his Bachelor's

Degree. Dan furthered his education at Michigan Tech University

earning his Masters Degree. Dan earned his P.H.D. at Arizona

State University.

When Dan moved back to Ishpeming in June of 1979, he started

working as a senior systems programmer at the offices at the

Mather A Mine. "When I first started working at the Mather A

offices as a senior systems programmer, my job duties were

installing mainframe software and tuning in and writing codes. I

got promoted to a supervisor of systems programming and from that

I got promoted to director of information services," stated Dan.

"For all of these jobs I had to go to college and know the

computer languages of Cobol, which stands for Common Buisness

Oriented Language, invented by a committee in the early 1960's.

It was pushed by the Federal Government for business

applications. I also had to know APL which stands for a

programming language, invented by Ken Iverson at Harvard in the 1960's. It was primarily used for scientific computing and mathematical modeling. Another computer language I had to know was REXX which stands for Restructed Extended Executor. REXX was invented by Mike Corvlishaw at Hursley Labs in England in the late 1970's. It is used throughout I.B.M. in many different applications. The last one I had to know is SQL/DS which is a relational database management system invented by I.B.M. and made commercially available in 1983. The first computer we used with these was a system 370, model 148, then we switched to a 30/31, and then we replaced that with a 30/83. These were all I.B.M. mainframe computers." he explained.

New and better computers are developing all of the time, and it is the same with all technology to make things take less time but at the same time be the most profitable it can be. "If we are going to keep developing better technology the people of today have to develop quantative skills such as math, science, chemistry, biology, and computer science." stated Dan. These skills are what is used to develop better technology, and better technology is what has made the Empire Mine such a good and profitable mine. "Although the Tilden Mine has all of the latest technology also I don't know how much longer it will be profitable for C.C.I. because I don't know how many reserves of magnetite they have and I don't know how much of a market there is for their hematite," explained Dan.

Dan thinks that C.C.I. will have a definite place in the history of the U.S., but how long it will stay open will depend on how much the government lets foreign countries dump iron ore and steel into the country. "Most importantly, I think in the

future C.C.I. must use modern management techniques such as Demming, and rid themselves of their old management culture based on Frederick Taylor's scientific management," stated.

Dan will be fifty-one years of age in August and now lives in Port Washington, Wisconsin where he works for I.B.M. He enjoys raquetball, tennis, jogging, and reading. Interviewing him, I learned a lot about computers that I had never known before. I am glad I interviewed him.