

Annette Troumbly

Eighty-Four

A Difficult Journey

"Keeping up with all the new technology that comes available all of the time there is so much to learn," stated my dad, Arthur Troumbly. He was born in Grand Rapids, Minnesota on July 7th, 1946. He is the oldest child of ten. His parents are Raymond and Betty Troumbly.

Dad started out in Cleveland Cliffs in his second year of college. He has taken many courses through out his years with CCI. "I've continued studying things throughout the years as technology has increased, so has the need for education. I've been learning things all along," he said.

Dad started his job in a little town called Taconite. It is located in northern Minnesota. The office was only 500 feet across from his home. He would wake up in the morning, get ready for work, and walk across the street. He has been now working in the iron mining industry for twenty-eight years.

The mines he has worked in are: Holman Mine, Canasteel Mine, and the Hilltrumble Mine. They were all located in Minnesota. When he lived out west, there were no iron mines, but instead they had uranium and oil shale exploration. He is presently working at the Empire Mine which is located in Palmer, Michigan.

"Traveling from place to place I have seen iron mines shut

down in Minnesota. I got to do a lot of different things that I would have never done if I was stuck in the same place. It was a good experience for both me and my family." Dad moved around so much because when the iron mines shut down the mine would send him to a new mine at a different location.

"I feel my duties have changed a lot, from when I first started" dad explained. For instance, he once used the old Monroe handcrank calculators, slide rulers, and data tables. He also had to look up things in books. "Now with trigometric calculators, computers, and electronic survey instruments, we can do a lot more in a much shorter period of time. There are far less people needed to do a job now when there were in the start of 1965," he explained.

The most challenging part of dad's job is trying to get everything done in the eight hours that is allocated. "There's keeping up with all the new technology that comes available all of the time. There is so much to learn," he stated.

The difficult duty dad has performed was designing an underground tunnel in a short period of time. Laughing he said "Connecting a decline, in an underground shaft out west and calculating all of the coordinates for the surveyors out there to put it in. I had to do the job real quickly, and I was very happy when the decline and the shaft connected up."

Dad's biggest responsibility is making sure all the ore that in the pit goes to the concentrating plant and all of the rocks go to the waste dumps. "I do the grading of ore and rocks that's probably my biggest responsibility," he explained.

On the job dad uses sophisticated computers with some programs that do a tremendous amount of mathematical analysis

real quickly so he can input data and come out with answers.

"There is a lot of new technology that's coming out all of the time and most of its computers software. Also we're working on laser leveling for the shovels. Right now that's one of my projects and we're trying to keep the shovels on a constant grade using a laser level which is new technology for our mine here," dad explained.

Safety is very important to dad. "Safety is always a big concern in our company. Accidents hurt both people involved in them and the company because they cost a lot," he said. One of the improvements that dad thinks should be made is continual safety education. Keeping everyone aware of new safety standards and safety devices are important undertakings.

Even though my dad has not been in any dangerous accidents in the mine, his father Raymond Troumbly, also known as Shorty, was in a life-threatening accident. Shorty was burned when he turned a breaker switch on for a high voltage line. It had exploded, and he was set on fire. Fortunately, Shorty's partner was with him and was able to put the flames out. There was no lasting damage.

One accident my dad did have did not happen in CCI but when he was working out in the prairies. There were many rattle snakes around Wyoming. He had to watch where he walked and listened for the rattle on a rattle snake. Another time was when dad was in Colorado, and he was surveying in the mountains. He had gotten in a bad spot where he had took a jump across a gully. He could not go back up and he could not go down. Thankfully he had a guy with him. The guy had to lower a rope to get him. With a laugh dad said "At the time I was a little afraid. It was

quite a fall and I was worried if there wasn't anything to hold onto. That was the last time I wore cowboy boots to climb around in mountains." To me dad is very brave for even trying to jump over the gully.

"I think if we can continually improve our process at the Empire we should be able to keep going through quite a few more years," he said.

Most of the steel companies have been losing a lot of money and some of them are in bankruptcy. "They are going to have to make some adjustments in order to compete with the foreign steel mills. The many electric mills are making a substantial impact on the big steel companies. To stay competitive we're going to have to keep on producing quality products at the lowest cost possible," dad said with a serious look.

"What I have enjoyed the most is the diversity and the daily challenges. My work has given me a chance to move around the country and meet a lot of different and interesting people. See a lot of different things," dad stated

In his spare time dad spends time on ham radios and helping two of his five kids out with their homework. He also spends a lot of time on the computer playing with different programs.

Dad has put in 28 years. "Hopefully I'll be able to put another fifteen years in working here in the Empire Mine!" I think dad will be able to finish his career after what he has already been through. I also hope he enjoys his future years!