

Mindy Salden

Fifteen

"Good Money Right Out of High School."

"Good money right out of high school," was Mr. Michael Johnson's response when he told me why he started working for the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company at the Tilden Mine.

Michael was born in 1957, in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and he was adopted by Roger and Helen Johnson. Michael has one sister Barb Lawry who was also adopted. Michael is now a father of five boys: Greg, Mike, Josh, Tom, and Jesse. His spouse's name is Terry.

In the last eighteen years Michael has had a variety of different jobs while employed at the Tilden and Empire mines. He has been a truck driver, grater, dozer, drill operator, worked on a blast crew, a crusher, practically anything to do with the pit and the mill. Currently he is on a liner crew.

Currently Michael is on a liner rig for the Empire Mine in Ishpeming Michigan. As I become curious about what a liner is, he explained that it is a part of a machine in the mill that rocks grind against as they are being ground into smaller pieces, as part of the pelletizing process. He explained that he had to change the liners as they wear out. "They're really big and really heavy," he said. Michael was telling me that his job requires a lot of lifting and pulling, and he must really be careful.

I was wondering if Michael's job has become easier or harder, He replied, "Mostly easier; almost everything has become easier

now a days, bigger and easier equipment." However he told me that the most difficult part of his job was "Being on the liner crew because you always have to watch what you're doing because the parts are so heavy or if something drops on you, you're not going to make it," he stated

Imagine coming down the hill backwards in a 75 ton truck with a load of dirt on the truck and then crunching your bosses pick up truck! Well Michael did, and he said it was the most dangerous situation that he has been in.

Michael works in a crew of four including himself. "Each one of them is a little different. It's fun at work" replied Michael as he told me what he liked about his job. One of the guys on his crew Michael went to school with since kindergarten.

I asked Michael if he saw any improvements for the future, and he said that a larger liner handle is suppose to make his job a little easier. "Everybody works a little safer now a days," he said.

Michael said that C.C.I. is down- sizing the work force and new and bigger equipment which means less people will help C.C.I. remain competitive.

I also asked Michael what his opinion was about the future. He told me about the Tilden and Empire in the future. He said that they "need less people and bigger equipment".

Michael enjoys reading, photography, and canoeing in his spare time. Michael is a very enjoyable person to listen to and he seems like a great father, husband, and he is very dedicated to his work.