

Lindsay Nardi,

forty-eight

MORE INTERESTING THAN I THOUGHT

I was fairly certain that my father had a difficult job. When I interviewed him, I found that my impression of his work, is nothing like the real thing.

My father, John Carl Nardi was born on July 24, 1954. He has two sisters and four brothers. His parents are John Aloisious Nardi and Laverne Holmgren. He grew up in Ishpeming and ended up marrying Lynn Salminen.

"I first got a job at Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company (CCI) because I found college too expensive," stated my father. He was going to go back to college after working two years, but he found that he was not able to. He has been working for twenty years, along with a lot of his relatives and friends. One of which, before my father worked there was his grandfather who fell when he was underground which resulted in his death. My father states "Most of them are family orientated. It's a good work force."

There have been many duties over his twenty working years. Some of which included: a contract miner, the lab, a welder, and a plant repairman. In his present job he fixes and repairs machinery, welding, and he also does maintenance work. Maintenance work, as I just found out, is repairing or replacing pieces of machinery. He went on a training program for three and

one-half years. These jobs are very challenging. He also served on a committee to make better working relations. My father has won a safety award and a snowblower.

"Probably the most challenging part of my job right now, is safety welding," as my father states referring to his present job. They weld things that workers' lives might depend on. If one were to break or something like that, they might die.

The most challenging part of his job throughout his years of work was as a raise miner. A miner had to go into the raise and drill and blast. After finishing the blasting, the worker have to crawl under the raise. Sometimes rocks would fall. As he explained, "One time they had one that came down and break your helmet and you're sitting in that raise with no helmet." That does seem quite dangerous. He changed from underground mining soon. "I could always go on different jobs when I got bored with the one that I was doing," stated my father. This was his response to what he liked most about his job, despite the fact that some jobs are very dangerous.

The most dangerous situation that my father has ever been in was when he was working underground. They were putting up slot raises in the drifts to knock down one. While they were blasting it, they hit an underground lake. All the drifts filled up and they flooded the lower level with water. "We had no idea that lake was there and just minutes before, we were probably five feet from being washed away by that lake," said my father. Fortunately, he was not injured.

My father had two knee surgeries from work. My father says there are lots of accidents but "not as many now as there used to be; underground there's a lot of accidents but now there doesn't

seem to be quite as many in the open pits." This is probably because of better working conditions.

My father explains his work conditions are noisy, lots of vibration, darkness, and wet. The safety standards and conditions change from job to job.

Some of the duties from job to job change also. There has been a lot of man power cuts. The job duties do not lighten, for as my father says "They put more responsibility on every worker." This is probably one of the reasons why he has felt like changing jobs at times. Other reasons include, lay-offs, shift work, health hazards, and strikes. My father reflects "I might have worked in the mine, but what I wish I would have done is stay in school and made the decision after I had a degree."

Some changes in safety standards that should be made is just in the long term occupational diseases. That though, will have to be worked on as I remember him saying. He remembers alot of things from the mine. I think that my father remembers strikes thje most.

My father remembers one strike in particular. As a member of the steelworkers union, he has been on strike three times. There is one time though, that he tells me about. The mine needed people to work while they were on strike. So, they hired some men, one which was my father who had the skills for welding etc. There were six crews of four. His crew went to the island in Marquette to work. His crew was all from CCI. My father says "I remember that night that they told us that they were gonna leave us four on and lay the rest off. We didn't dare go out to our cars that night. We stayed inside." This may also be one of the reasons why my father has thought of changing jobs. Although,

there are many reasons not to change jobs, it is a good paying job and it also has a good future.

The mine probably has a good future because they have the key to success. The key to success, according to my father, is a good location and also the employees were willing to take cuts when it was needed.

To have an even better future, and remain competitive my father states "They must have better relations between employee and employer. There must be more trust developed." This is very important and the company must remember this in the years to come.

The workers hopefully will also be remembered as a lot of good honest people who are very hardworking. "I hope they remember the company as someone that truly cared about the area" as my father states.

My father also has some advice for the students which seems very important. They have to realize that mining is not just pick and shovel anymore. It's alot more advanced than we think. Students should pay more attention to their studies cause they are more important than they think.

My father has a son in college right now who complains about having no money. My father can remember back when he felt the same way which contributed to his quitting college at the time. He would like to tell everyone to stay in school, and get their degree. Here is it in his own words, "No matter how poor you are, no matter how bad it feels at the time, stay in school and get your degree." He tells me that some people do go back to school, but it seems like it would be quite hard.

I am very glad that I interviewed my father. I found alot

about him that I would have never known. For one thing, he has a much harder job than I realize. He also gives me some very good advice on staying in school. My father has led a very interesting life, and I do not think I will ever forget the advice he gave me.