

# Free Agents, Outdoors

## Why Steelworkers Love Job

By STEVE BARNABY

Bronzed bodies, rippling muscles, and craggy faces are the trademarks of road construction men. Underneath this tough veneer, what are these guys like?

To answer this, we went to the Jeffries Freeway project on Schoolcraft Rd., and talked with these "last of a breed" men who mold the multi-million dollar highways which keep this country moving.

They run giant earthmovers, carry 100 pound cement bags over each shoulder and, yes, even bend steel with their bare hands.

Building a stretch of highway takes the skilled hands and minds of laborers, carpenters, rod busters, cement finishers, structural workers,

electricians, truck drivers and surveyors. All belonging to different unions, working for different contractors, they coordinate and put together a highway more easily than most of us put together the kid's bicycle.

Take the crew from local 426 of the Reinforced Steelworkers, working with Darin & Armstrong Construction Inc. of Livonia along the Jeffries.

These men lay the steel rods which reinforce the cement on an overpass. It takes between 40 and 200 tons of rod to complete an overpass, every foot of which is carried, wired, laid, and welded into place by these men.

Ed Hansen, 45, of 12124 Boston Post, Livonia, is foreman of his crew and talks proudly of what he learned

through a three year apprenticeship program. During this time, he was taught how to read blueprints, became a certified welder, and worked in the field.

His son Steve, 21, a graduate of Stevenson High School, works on the job with his father as an apprentice.

"The hardest part of this job is coping with the weather. We might make a lot of money by the hour, but it's hard to put together a 40-hour week because of the rain," says the elder Hansen.

In his leisure time, Hansen travels around the country to square dance. He is presently the caller for the Livonia LiveWire Squaredancing Club. Although working year

round outdoors, he has a penchant for camping. Dick Carnton, a Detroit, has been on the job for 20 years.

"I like this job," he boasts. "It's good to be outside and work. It builds up an appetite. Even a bologna sandwich tastes good after a day on the job."

Carnton is one who has followed the family tradition. His father and grandfather were also reinforced steel workers.

"I like to go and bet the races at DRC. It's good fun and you win some. Of course you lose a few, too," he laughs.

Al Nagy, 14019 Denne, Livonia, a steel worker for

eight years, dedicates his spare time to his family of a wife and three children. Besides fishing, umpiring, and playing softball, he coaches a Livonia little league team.

"Actually, we're not any different from anybody else. This is just a good way to make a buck," he says.

Hansen says he has come to know literally hundreds of men because of the numerous jobs on which he has worked.

These men are proud because they are free agents, able to go anywhere in the United States and work at their trades.

"That's one of the advantages of this work. You're your own man," says one.



MILT COTTRELL, of Livonia, works on the overpasses along the Jeffries Freeway. A steelworker, he lays the steel rod foundation over which cement is poured. Here he is straightening wires which are used to support the overpass. (Observer photo by Bob Woodring)

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To assist in the change-over, LIT is offering a special course on how to "think metric." It is open for enrollment to anyone interested but will be directed primarily to engineering support personnel who may soon face problems in their work situations.

The metric system course, offered without college credit, will be taught on Tuesday evenings at 7:30 beginning Sept. 4 by Fay E. Gifford, of General Motors research laboratories.

Students may register now but no later than Aug. 30. Fee for the course is \$30.

Further information is available from Dr. Richard E. Michel, dean of LIT's Technical Institute division. The college is at Ten Mile and Northwestern in Southfield.

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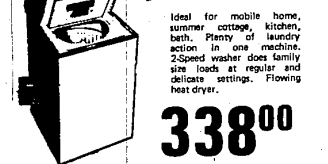


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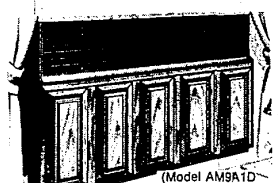


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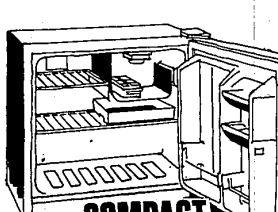
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