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*I sent this letter
to mother*



VIA AIR MAIL
CORREO AEREO

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APO 16
NEW YORK, N.Y.



Poughkeepsie, N.Y.
May 31, 1961

Dear Mother, Dad and Bill,

Yes, I could have squeezed in a note acknowledging and thanking you for the \$400 check, and I regret not having done so. Lately I have been busy as the proverbial one-armed paper hanger, and all to some avail. As of today I put in my first eight hours as a machine operator - computer programmer trainee with IBM Corporation here in Poughkeepsie (pronounced Po-kiop'-see).

You may wonder why it is that I have such a job... It was about ~~a month~~ ^{six weeks} ago that I decided to attempt to find a job in the field of electronic computer programming. This decision was brought about by a number of factors. One was that I

could see a rocky future in store for me in the field of construction, due to the fact that it has proved to be quite difficult for me to obtain a job - in view of my medical history. Also, a very decisive factor was my lack of a dynamic interest in civil engineering. From what I had heard about computer programming, it sounded like an extremely interesting field. Also, there is a large demand for programmers, and the pay seems quite adequate. Hence, I began following up every ~~with~~ ad concerning programmers and calling on every company whom I suspected ~~to~~ might have a use for them. However, I actually felt my chances were very slim, ^{as almost all} ~~as most~~ of the firms were looking ^{for} either experienced programmers or for math, physics, or electrical engineering graduates.

Therefore, I also continued looking for a job in civil engineering, with the thought in mind that if I did continue to work as a C.E., I would go to night school, obtain an M.S. in mathematics by June of 1963, and then perhaps go into mathematics or computer programming. But finally after a (calls) dozen or two unsuccessful tries, I came across ~~an~~ an employment agency ad in the N.Y. Times calling for computer programmer trainees. I answered it, took some tests and had an interview on that same day (Tuesday, May 9th), had another interview on the 11th, and the job was offered to me on the 17th. The following ~~morning~~ morning (Thursday) I accepted; medical the following Monday ~ and here I am in Longbeepsie. As I said, today was my first day on the job,

and was it busy! I would even go so far as to say that I earned my keep.

But let me explain a bit about the job itself. I will not go directly into computer programming, but instead will work for about a year as a machine operator. As a machine operator, I will learn to run various IBM computers, consoles, card punching machines, card sorters, electronic statistical machines, accounting machines, magnetic tape units, card readers, paper tape units, automatic printers (of information received from the computer) and a host of other gadgetry. After this period of perhaps a year, I will be ready to go into applied computer programming. I won't attempt to explain programming now, as it would take me pages - and would even so not be a very accurate description.

At the Poughkeepsie plant they run three shifts a day, and starting Monday I shall be on the 12:00 midnight to 8:30 AM shift. The reason for this being that during the day shift everyone is so busy they have no time in which to teach ~~me~~ the pleons (like myself) all they should learn about the machines.

A very nice feature of working here in Poughkeepsie is that IBM has its own country club, complete with an 18-hole golf course, swimming pool and tennis courts, for the ^{use} of employees and their guests.

Holly and Susan are in excellent health and spirits - as am I. We would all very much like to see you. You know it has been almost

three years. It would be great if we could all live in the same general vicinity for a while - at least. How is Bill doing? Where is he going to school. Would love to hear from you again.

I must close now. It's 11:40, and I must be at work by 8:00. It is a mile and two tenths to work from ~~there~~ where I am now living, and I will have to walk until I find a ride. (You probably remember I sold my car before leaving Portland). Oh yes, I am temporarily living in a rooming house, but will stay only until next Tuesday - as someone has this room reserved starting Wednesday. Therefore, I can't give you an address just yet, but will have to use Holly's for a while - until I find an apartment.

Again, I would love to have
news of you all.

Love,

Pete

P.S.

Only two not-so-good things about
the job: 1) I have to pay the
\$300 employment agency fee
and 2) it is almost impossible
to get around in this town without
a car. Oh well, I'll survive.

Pete