

## Jack Goes To Training

Jack, a 43-year-old machinist, had worked for Scanton Industries for 23 years. It seemed that the need to learn something new was constant, and Jack was getting nervous about his job. The nervousness grew last week when he saw a new batch of equipment arrive. It looked something like the machinery he uses now, but it was hooked up to computers. Bill, his foreman, said, "It looks like you'll be going back to school for a couple of days, Jack. You're going to have to learn how to program your work into the computer." Jack smiled but felt sick to his stomach. He always had been good with his hands, but he had never done well in school. All Jack thought about that weekend was the training he would be going to. He fell asleep Sunday night thinking about it. The phone awakened him at 7:00 the next morning. It was Bill telling him that training had been switched from the local training center downtown to the local school because of a sudden strike at the training center. The school was the only place available on short notice.

As Jack walked up the steps of the school, he felt sick to his stomach again. He entered the hall and then the classroom. Everything was similar to what he remembered about school, except that now there was a computer on each desk. Even the smell was the same, and it brought back memories. Some were good (the guys getting together between classes), but most were bad (being yelled at, taking tests, and doing poorly). As he sat in the wooden chair in the back where he used to sit, he looked out of the window and began to daydream, just as he had done in high school.

The other 20 trainees were sitting quietly at their desks. All of them seemed as nervous as Jack. Suddenly someone burst through the door. "Hi, my name is Jason Reston. I'm your instructor for this course. You're here to learn some basic computer skills and how to program the machines that you will be using at work. I realize that you come from different companies and will operate different machines, but the process for all of them is similar. First, I am going to show you how to get signed on and into the program you will be running. . . ." Jack was back from his daydream. Well, here we go, he thought.

At lunch, Jack and his classmate Murray went to a local deli. "Are you keeping up?" Jack asked.

"Are you kidding? Are we going to be tested on this stuff?" asked Murray. "I have no idea. If we are, I'm dead," said Jack.

The afternoon went slowly. The trainer simply gave an instruction, and the trainees entered the information into the computer. Then he gave another and they entered that as well. "How are we supposed to remember all this?" Murray whispered. The second day was worse. On a few occasions, Jack was jolted out of his daydream while staring out of the window. "Jack," yelled Jason, "are you with us?" At 3:00 P.M. on the second afternoon, Jason announced that they would be tested to see what they had learned. Jack looked at the test questions. Was he that stupid? He did not even understand many of the questions. Would he lose his job if he failed this test? He could almost hear his boss yelling at him, "You are fired! Get out, get out!"