

## ***SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF!***

Recently, we initiated a drive to help people who didn't have their voter registration cards acquire them. The deadline to register to vote in the upcoming "Presidential Election" was the first of October 2004. The most important right that we have in this country is the opportunity to help choose our political leaders. It does not matter who you vote for as long as you exercise your political right. Too often, people complain about their taxes or other things they disagree with, but they won't use the power of their vote. **Shame on them!**

Currently, we have helped seven (7) non-registered voters get their voter registration cards. Becky Gaydos took care of the necessary paperwork and was responsible for helping people sign up. The greatness of this country is the freedoms that we have and share. It is protected by our Constitution, Bill of Rights and the sacrifices our young men and women make every day. Let's not cheapen their efforts!

## ***PLEASE VOTE!***

## ***THE FIRST AWS ACCREDITED TESTING FACILITY IN TEXAS, ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL AUDIT!***

Many people don't realize it, but Base Line Data, Inc. is the first AWS Accredited Welder Testing Facility in Texas. We test over 2,000 welders a year at our facility at 515 Commerce Street in Portland, Texas. In addition, we assist our clients in developing Welding Procedure Specifications, perform Tensile testing, Charpy-V Impact testing, Hardness testing and many other types of material test. All of these are performed to different types of standards such as ASME Section IX, AWS D1.1, Military Standard 248D, API-1104 and American Bureau of Shipping.

We maintain a database of about 7,000+ welders who have tested at our facility. We can provide or assist you in finding the right welding workforce for your needs.

We have just completed our fourth audit by the American Welding Society. This audit consisted of having an AWS evaluator coming into our facility assessing the calibration of our equipment and the control of our material and documentation. **We have met their standard for continued Accreditation! A special thanks to the weld shop personnel for their organization and all their HARD WORK!**



### Portland Office

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### Pasadena Office

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## ***PERFORMANCE REVIEW!***

### ***The Myth and the Truth!***

Each year, Base Line Data, Inc. has the intent to sit down with its employees and review his/her accomplishments for a raise evaluation. This does not come automatically. Usually, a raise comes through promotions, merit or an annual performance review. Although, it would be nice to be called in when a year has gone by since the last evaluation, this tends to be the exception, not the rule. I get busy, I'm out of town or I just don't think about who is up for review. A better method has always been for the employee to request his/her own evaluation. Some employees deserve raises and some don't. Most know when they deserve one. But for a fact, all employees deserve to be reviewed! Raises are evaluated on the basis of accomplishments since the last review, financial position of the company and an employee's attitude and support for the company and their co-workers. Many employees think that Base Line Data, Inc. is given rate increases from its clients once a year. **This is not true!** When a "work agreement" is signed with a client, this locks the invoicing rate in for a certain period of time. This period of time is usually from one to three years. Normally, at the end of this period of time, we get a letter wanting to extend this time for another year or so. So the truth is that Base Line Data, Inc. usually does not get the chance to elevate its billing rate for several years. Some clients will even try to extend the original invoicing rate from one to an additional three years. Doing the math, that leaves Base Line Data, Inc. with maybe getting a raise every three to five years. **It isn't fair, but this happens all the time.** With the employee being evaluated and possibly getting raises once a year, it's not long until there is little or no profit for the employer. Profits are needed to fund raises and purchase new technology.

**Where is the profit of the job?** It is never consistently on the upper-level personnel because they have been with the company the longest and moved up to the high side of the scale. Most of the time, we just break even on the senior "Baseliners." The profits come from the newer guys added to the inspection field. As long as you have a mix, there tends to be enough profit to justify the work. What has happened in a few plants, but not all of them is that the client only wants the top-end guys at their facility. Rather than spread the work around and develop new inspectors for the future, the job ends up being top-heavy. This will leave a short-fall of experienced inspectors for the future. **Consequently, the profits are marginal when you work only senior people!**

Getting back to performance reviews, not everyone deserves automatic raises. Raises should come only after the employee has accomplished new certifications (such as an API-510, 653, 570 or CWI), developed additional experience and displayed a satisfactory work performance and attitude. An employee that doesn't seem to get his/her reports done or are always having to re-do a report because they didn't satisfy the client's needs will be looked at differently than one that satisfies all of the job requirements. The billable and non-billable hours of each employee have been measured for the last ten years. Some employees still want to tell me about all of the money that they're making for the company. They might be surprised if they knew the truth!

If you want to be reviewed, set up an appointment. You deserve it! Pick up an "Employee Performance Evaluation" form and be prepared to honestly discuss your accomplishments.

*The following Accolades need to be given to Jesse Torres, Jr., Marcus Guerrero, and Jesse Rios, III. Thanks guys for doing a great job!*

J.W.:

I just wanted to commend Jesse and crew for a job well done scanning two Flare KO Drums for me. In spite of intermittent rains, he still got the job done on or ahead of schedule, and in a very professional manner. I never once heard a complaint and never once observed them when they weren't actively working. Please extend my thanks to him and the crew.

Duane Rod

## ***EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE!***

Most people by now know where my political leanings are. I have tried very hard not to influence anyone as to whom they should or should not vote for. I know some of you will disagree with this statement and that is your right. You have the choice to vote for whomever you chose in this year's presidential election. I don't care whether you vote as your parents did, a straight Democratic or Republican ticket. Those rights have been paid for by the young men and women giving their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many have died before them protecting these same rights. It makes no difference whether you believe in what is happening overseas, but hopefully you appreciate the price that these soldiers are paying. They support the freedoms that we have. Each day they perform their jobs without complaining. All for us! If you don't understand these freedoms, spend a little time talking to others that have come from overseas or crossed barren land. Maybe they can explain the differences in this country and the one that they left. This is the greatest country in the world. It is the only country that I know of that people are risking their lives in inner tubes, rafts, dilapidated old boats or anything that floats to come here. They cross waterless deserts looking for the freedoms that we have. They die by the hundreds trying to get into this dreaded place. This is the only country in the world where people are lined up begging to be given access. **Why?** I am still waiting to turn on the television set or pick up a paper and see where an American has illegally swam the Rio Grande to get into Mexico. Maybe it happens all the time, but it's not being reported. Over the centuries, our forefathers have wrestled with the hardships of building this Nation. All so we could speak our minds, worship any religion and chose whatever political leader we desired. The least we could do is honor them by taking the time to cast our vote. We are spoken loud and clear. We don't hesitate to tell someone what we don't like. We all deserve so much more. I'm not being treated fairly. I say stop being a crybaby and take the time to affect change. Stand up and be a man! Stop blaming others when you don't even vote. Exercise your rights that was earned by the sweat and blood of others. Become active rather than cry all the time. Believe what you want to believe, but have the conviction to participate in this political process. If you don't like it change it. If you can't stand it and won't make the effort to correct it. **Leave!**

## ***EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE!***

## ***LET'S KNOCK THIS DOOR DOWN!***

There have and always will be doors or walls obstructing what you are trying to accomplish. Many people get tired of butting their head against the wall trying to get through. It's easy to give up and not waste the effort. After bleeding yourself over and over again maybe you should quit. Why go through the disappointment trying to affect a change. This could apply, trying to make a sale, correcting a misbehaving child or a multitude of other scenarios. Let's knock this door down! You cannot quit every time something gets tough. There have been times that I just wanted to stick my head in the sand. Many people think I do this, but that's not true. I generally take the time to reflect on what position I am going to take. I strategize as to the best way to handle the situation. I then, and only then, address the situation.

As we go through life, there will always be rough, steep roads, personalities and numerous other things that stand in your way. As you manipulate, use diplomacy or other failed methods, maybe you should just knock the door down."

During the Debate, the President of the United States talked about the sixteen resolutions that were passed by the United Nations telling Iraq that they had to do certain things or they would pay serious consequences. Nothing happened! How many warnings was enough? After the seventeenth was passed and still no action, President Bush said, let's knock this door down. **The door has been knocked down!**

## ***ANOTHER VISUAL TESTING (VT) CLASS COMPLETED***

**At Base Line Data, Inc. we will never wait for someone else to dictate how we should train our people.** We continue to upgrade and develop our employees on a weekly basis. The commitment of having the best inspection workforce must come from management and resources must be spent. Other companies have the clients pay for the training of their employees on the job. Although some of this is necessary, the employee must have some basic knowledge before entering the work site. We train our employees as extensively as we can before we put them on the job.

We have just completed another twenty-four (24) hour Visual Testing Course. It consisted of the basic inspection of welds and a familiarization of the AWS D1.1, ASME B31.3, Military Standard 248D, 271, 1689, 278 and 2035 codes. A three part examination was administered at the end of the course. The student had to make an 80% grade before being certified.

Congratulations to the following students for completing the course: Jesus Rodriguez (GMF), Enrique Urtado, Jr. (GMF), Hector Yzaguirre (GMF), Ignacio Hernandez (GMF), John F. Schack (GMF), Richard Taylor (Anteon), Terry Kitts (Anteon), Mack Oliver (Anteon), Mike Humphrey (BLD), Steve Fey (BLD), Moo Adkins (BLD), and Juan Hernandez (BLD).

We have just completed another night and daytime API-653 Preparatory Course. The exam was held the 29th of September. On the 20th of September, there was a forty (40) hour course given on Eddy Current. This was taught by Monty O'Conner of ECT. On October 4th, 2004, the API-510 and API-570 Preparatory Courses will start. These courses will consist of two separate courses taught at night and also two forty (40) hour courses during the day. On the 25th of October, there will be a twenty-four (24) hour course given on UltraPIPE. There will be approximately fifteen students in attendance. On the 13th of December there will be a Preparatory course for CWI certification. The examination will be in February of 2005.

Marginally trained people perform marginal inspections. Is it better to save a few dollars or have the inspection conducted properly? **The choice is always in your hands!**



*Above are pictures taken from the Visual Testing Course.*

## ***Thank God for Marines!***

A college professor, an avowed Atheist, was teaching his class. He shocked several of his students when he flatly stated he was going to prove there was no God. Addressing the ceiling he shouted: "God, if you are real, then I want you to knock me off this platform. I'll give you 15 minutes!" The lecture room fell silent. You could have heard a pin fall. Ten minutes went by. Again he taunted God, saying, "Here I am, God. I'm still waiting." His countdown got down to the last couple of minutes when a Marine - just released from active duty and newly registered in the class walked up to the professor, hit him full force, and sent him tumbling from his lofty platform. The professor was out cold!

At first, the students were shocked and babbled on in confusion. The young Marine took a seat in the front row and sat silent. The class fell silent...waiting. Eventually, the professor came to, shaken. He looked at the young Marine in the front row. When the professor regained his senses and could speak he asked: "What's the matter with you? Why did you do that?"

"God was busy..... He sent me."

**Thank Goodness for One Nation Under God!**

## Portrait of an Employee

This person plays a vital part in our organization. She has performed all tasks that we have asked of her. She makes all of the equipment training classes. With our limited room she tries to keep everything organized. She's not shy about making sure that you do your job. She has a strange last maiden name, but we won't mention that. This person is Gail Adams. You won't find her laying down on the job. She gives it her all. It's nice having people that don't worry about what you ask them to do. They just do it and ask for more. I have an intense respect for her. Her life hasn't always been easy, but she hasn't given up. Bring your equipment in dirty or damaged and you will hear from her. I sup-



port her. If you don't take care of the equipment that you need for your job, then it won't work the next time you need it. This is Gail's second employment with us. She was with us for several years before she went on to bigger and better things. Sometimes those things aren't better and there is probably a lesson there? Gail has the responsibility of organizing and checking out all of the equipment that you need for your job. If she refuses you something, it's probably because I have told her that I want to make sure where the equipment is going. I want to thank Gail for the great job she is doing and wish her the best of luck in the future. **Thanks!**

### *LOOKING FOR THE BEST TECHNOLOGY, BUT IS IT REALLY NEEDED?*

Steel Wire Rope or cabling is used throughout the industry, but you never hear much about the inspection of it. It is used for support for guy lines on stacks and radio towers. It is used on cranes for hoisting operations and ski lifts for moving people. Occasionally, you hear about an accident when a cable breaks and drops a load. Most of the inspections performed are visuals. In many cases the cable is just replaced periodically whether it needs to be or not. **Is there a need to inspect it?** If you have a pro-active program of replacing your cabling every so many cycles or visually inspecting it before a major lift, you are probably doing enough. All inspections should be documented with the inspector's name, date of installation, date of inspection, identifying characteristics, address of installation, hours of service that rope has been used, type of use, and noted defects. If none of this is being done, you may want to perform a Magnetic Flux Leakage examination on it periodically. This examination consist of running a MFL unit over the cable from one end to the other. It will pick up local flaws (LF) and loss of the metallic cross-sectional area (LMA). You then compare it with a reference segment of rope that represents the maximum cross-sectional area.

We are in the process of identifying how these inspections are being performed and how often. I would strongly appreciate any feedback on this information. We evaluated MFL inspection equipment manufactured by the Russians during our visit at the NDT World Conference in Montreal, Canada. In Europe, these inspections are performed on a routine basis. You can contact J.W. Ralls or Larry Yell, if you would like to share how your company performs these examinations. Larry Yell and J.W. Ralls' phone number is (361) 643-3400 or you can reach us at [lyell@bldata.com](mailto:lyell@bldata.com) or [jwralls@bldata.com](mailto:jwralls@bldata.com). We would appreciate your input. Thanks!

## *What you Didn't Know About the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier In the name of Honor!*

1) *How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknown and why?*

*Answer: 21 steps. It alludes to the twenty-one gun salute, which is the highest honor given any military or foreign dignitary.*

2) *How long does he hesitate after his about face to begin his return walk and why?*

*Answer: 21 seconds for the same reason as answered above.*

3) *Why are his gloves wet?*

*Answer: His gloves are moistened to prevent his losing his grip on the rifle.*

4) *Does he carry his rifle on the same shoulder all the time and if not, why not?*

*Answer: He carries the rifle on the shoulder away from the tomb. After his march across the path, he executes an about face and moves the rifle to the outside shoulder.*

5) *How often are the guards changed?*

*Answer: The guards are changed every thirty minutes.*

6) *What are the physical traits of the guard limited to?*

*Answer: For a person to apply for guard duty at the tomb, he must be between 5'-10" and 6'-2" tall and his waist size cannot exceed 30." Other requirements of the Guard: They must commit two years of life to guard the tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb and cannot drink any alcohol on or off duty for the rest of their lives. They cannot swear in public for the rest of their lives and cannot disgrace the uniform (fighting) or the tomb in any way. After two years, the guard is given a wreath pin that is worn on their lapel signifying they served as guard of the tomb. There are only 400 presently worn. The guard must obey these rules for the rest of their lives or give up the wreath pin. The shoes are specially made with very thick soles to keep the heat and cold from their feet. There are metal heel plates that extend to the top of the shoe in order to make the loud click as they come to a halt. There are no wrinkles, folds or lint on the uniform. Guards dress for duty in front of a full length mirror. The first six months of duty a guard cannot talk to anyone, nor watch TV. All off duty time is spent studying the 175 notable people laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. A guard must memorize who they are and where they are interred. Among the notables are: President Taft, Joe, E. Lewis (the boxer) and Medal of Honor winner Audie Murphy, (the most decorated soldier of WWII) of Hollywood fame. Every guard spends five hours a day getting his uniforms ready for guard duty.*

**ETERNAL REST GRANT THEM O LORD,**

**AND LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON THEM**

*In 2003 as Hurricane Isabelle was approaching Washington, DC, our US Senate/House took two days off with anticipation of the storm. On the ABC evening news, it was reported that because of the dangers from the hurricane, the military members assigned the duty of guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were given permission to suspend the assignment. They respectfully declined the offer, "No way, Sir!" Soaked to the skin, marching in the pelting rain of a tropical storm, they said that guarding the Tomb was not just an assignment, it was the highest honor that can be afforded to a service person. The tomb has been patrolled continuously, 24/7, since 1930. We can be very proud of our young men and women in the service no matter where they serve. God Bless and keep them!*

*Article submitted by Terry Files of Base Line Data, Inc.*

**MAY YOUR WAY ALWAYS BE GUIDED BY INTEGRITY AND HONOR,**

**EVEN IN TROUBLING STORMS!**

**SEMPER FI!**

## PRESSURE TESTING

The completion of major repairs and the fabrication of new equipment generally require a pressure test to ensure that they are capable of handling the pressures that they will operate at. This test, if performed with water is called a hydrostatic test and if air is used it is called a pneumatic test. The test is normally considered to be a tightness test to ensure that all welds and connections are leak free. To maximize their effectiveness, a hydrostatic test is normally performed at 1.5 times its maximum operating pressure. A pneumatic test is performed at 1.1 times its maximum operating pressure. The operating temperature of the system will, from time to time require this test pressure to be adjusted. The most common test performed is the hydrostatic test on piping and pressure vessels. Most often, a pump capable of taking water and compressing it to a higher pressure is used for introducing pressure into the assembly. A calibrated pressure gauge is used to indicate when the test pressure has been reached. Although this test is relatively simple, there are several items that need to be verified. Below is a list of things to take into consideration when performing hydrostatic or pneumatic testing:

- All fabrication work or repairs must be completed and approved before consideration of a pressure test.
- Materials and components that could be damaged by the test must be removed from the assembly, and spooled or blinded prior to introducing the pressure.
- Consideration must be given to the atmosphere and water temperature before performing the test. Materials that are not designed for low temperature application could fail because of the temperature of the test medium and atmosphere.
- Some test pressures must be adjusted to take into consideration the temperature that the system operates at.
- All pressure gauges must be currently calibrated and within the acceptable range of the test.
- The temperature of the water must be at ambient temperature.
- All air on a hydrostatic test must be removed from the line.
- Only the necessary people should be in attendance when the system is pressure tested for the first time. If failure occurs, this minimizes the risk to unnecessary personnel.
- Air test, should never be performed without a “**special testing procedure**” that requires special authorization.
- The air must be bled out of all high point vents to eliminate air being in the system that may go undetected if leaking.
- All pressure tests must be monitored to assure that over pressurization does not occur. Direct sunlight will cause the pressure in the system to elevate, which could cause failure.
- Each pressure test should be walked down and all surfaces monitored for minute leaks. A leak can occur that will not necessarily reduce the test pressure.
- **Each system test must be evaluated for the capability of its design to handle the weight of the fluid being used to test it. Systems have collapsed because of the weight of water.**
- Documentation of the test is an essential part of a good quality control system.

**Pressure testing is an essential part of a system’s reliability. Performed properly and using “qualified personnel” it can protect the environment, personnel and eliminate costly downtime.**

## ***SUGAR COATING THE FACTS!***

It might seem insensitive, but I believe one of the worst things that you can do when having a discussion with an employee is sugar coating the facts. If an employee has messed up, let him/her know. No one is perfect and things do go wrong. **Tell it like it is!** Constructive criticism does have merit. If an employee doesn't know what they have done wrong, they can't correct it. If left alone, the problem will probably happen again. As a supervisor, manager or owner, this is a job that many hide from. They are afraid someone won't like them. This is not a popularity contest. People need to know how they are perceived. When you finally get the problem on top of the table, it can be rectified. Disappointments with a person's performance or actions does not mean that employee is going to be terminated. Left alone without discussion or identifying the facts could possibly cause a termination. Don't put your head in the sand, the problem will not go away. Many times the employee appreciates knowing exactly where they stand. This at least allows them to make corrections, if desired. If not, their destiny is in their hands. Accountability is an individual thing, but they must know what you're thinking. **Stop sugar coating the facts!**

## ***IT WASN'T MY FAULT!***

Then whose fault was it? I have heard this so often, I can't count the times. When I was growing up, we were expected to take accountability for our actions. If we did something wrong, we were taught to admit it and paid some form of retribution. My mother raised eleven (11) kids. If one of us stole something from a store, we were marched down there and either had to give the item back or pay for it. We then paid another price with the warming of our butts. With the coming of Dr. Spock, we changed the accountability rules. To protect against maybe damaging a kids self esteem, it was decided that corporate punishment must be eliminated. We should be using reason instead. It must be working great because look at all the drug use, drive-by shootings, Columbine High Schools and disrespect.

It's never too late to become a man or woman of substance. You can make a change in yourself. Take accountability for your actions. It's okay to admit that you messed up. You can always win more respect by admitting to the truth. If you were driving 65 MPH in a 55 MPH zone, pay the ticket or go to defensive driving. It was your fault, now pay the price.

Each one of us has, but one walk through life. Each road will be different. It is our own walk. Some will be rocky and others will be smooth. If it happens to be rocky, C'est la Vie! The road I take will always be the one where I am accountable for my actions. I hope you learn to do the same. You are the example for your children and the next generation! **Be a good one!**

## ***ORIGINAL THOUGHT!***

*Have you ever really wondered what you could have become if you had really applied yourself? People accuse the world or others of not dealing them a fair set of cards. They don't have this or that because they are being held down. They always have some major crisis happening in their life. They can't seem to manage their bills with the income that they make. Their relationships always seem to go sour. They tend to assess what others have and are even jealous. They tend to feel that they are being treated unfairly. Maybe it's time to look in the mirror and find out what you're doing wrong. Develop a plan and work the plan! Most successful people don't sit around blaming someone else. They take charge of their life. They set up a budget and stick to it to deal with their financial woes. They work on their relationships and make changes to themselves. The world does not owe them a living. People are not going to love you if you don't work on your short-comings. Look at where you want to go and get started. Every task is accomplished by taking the first step. No one is going to change you, but you can change yourself. You can do anything that you want to do as long as you develop a plan and work on it everyday. Only you can take control of your life! **Do it now before it's too late!***

## ***WHY WE WORK SAFELY?***

Recently there was a bulletin board placed in the hall at the Base Line Data office with the heading of “Why Safety is Our #1 Priority.” It was meant to make people think. We asked everyone with the company to place a picture of their wife, children or someone that they love on the board. This was to remind us that there are more people than just ourselves that depend on us. We don’t think about getting hurt, but when we do, there are many that suffer because of it. Workman’s Compensation does not pay much when we are hurt and cannot work. House payments and rent must still be paid. Our children still need school clothes, supplies and food to eat. Gasoline is not cheap. Besides you, everyone else suffers, too. If you can’t work safely for yourself, hopefully you can work safely for those that depend on you. **Take a look at the people who love you and work safe!** If you would like to participate, please e-mail pictures to Lindsay @ lralls@bldata.com. **Keep in Mind:** *With Halloween around the corner, keep in mind the safety of your children and others if they go out Trick or Treating. Drive safely and watch out for little ones crossing the streets.*



## ***UNITED WAY KICKOFF***

I want to thank all of you that participated in the United Way Campaign. I understand the sentiments of some that didn’t pledge. When the CEO’s of these organizations are highly paid, I can see the resistance you might have in donating your money. I want to confirm to you that I think this is an individual choice. If you have elected to give, great, if not I think that’s great, too. I, for one, have seen the good that this charity organization has done for people. Yes, there are people that are maybe more compensated than they should be. I will not be deterred by a few greedy people from doing what I consider the right thing. I see greed all the time, but I make the effort not to pass judgment on these individuals. Base Line Data, Inc. is a unique company in the sense that it donates to almost all charitable organizations. Why? There are always people less fortunate than ourselves. Many of those can’t help themselves, so we extend a helping hand. I have been so fortunate to have come from a sharecropper’s family of eleven kids, father died when I was seven and still been able to be successful. During the depression, as poor as we were, my parents never turned down a hobo for food when they stopped by. I have lived through some of the same misfortunes that these people suffer from. I choose to give because of the way I was raised, not because I’m turned off by greedy people. There will always be greedy people and there will always be people that need a helping hand. Help them if it’s in your heart. **The choice will always be yours!**

## ***CONVICTIONS!***

### ***Knowing What You Stand For!***

Part of being a man or a woman is having convictions and knowing what you stand for. I recently went back through a diary that I kept while I was in Vietnam. Although, I didn’t write as much as I wished, there were things in there that made me laugh. A young man of twenty thinks differently from a man of fifty-six. What I thought then is not necessarily what I think now. People should reflect about their opinions and form a conviction. You should know what you stand for. It’s okay to change your mind. If you are just a parrot, mimicking what others say, you probably haven’t thought out the process. I listen to others speak all the time. Many will tell you exactly what you want to hear. Others will express themselves. I would rather know what a person is really thinking. As an example, I have heard salesmen flip-flop from meeting to meeting. They’re going to tell a client what he wants to hear. These clients recognize when they are being “soft soaped.” It’s never what impression they give you when you are in front of them, but rather what they are saying when you are gone.

We all have different opinions and I believe that is okay. A problem occurs when we have no conviction to support those opinions. ***Know what you stand for!***

## AS I LOOK BACK!

Although I never try to look back at yesterday, but focus on the road ahead, sometimes it does have value. Knowing where you have been eliminates the same mistakes and makes your journey a little easier. As I look back on my life, I am certain I could have done some things better. I did a pretty good job with my kids, but I think I could have made them appreciate the value of the dollar a little more. Money is a tool that has to be earned to be appreciated. My kids have had it a little too good. Every dollar I have was earned. It has no value other than what positive things it can accomplish. Nothing was given to me free. There was no “silver spoon” in my mouth at the time of my birth. My mother and daddy raised eleven children and some were raised during the “Great Depression.” We were sharecroppers who worked other people’s land. Because of this I think about how money should be spent. The following are things I think we have done very well:

**The reward doesn’t justify the means!** We could have been a much larger company, if we would have been willing to be unethical. This didn’t happen! We have maintained our honor and will continue to do so. We don’t have a problem sleeping at night or wondering whether we have put qualified people on the job. The work we do is important and we will provide the best we have.

**I have always tried to speak the truth!** I don’t necessarily tell people what they want to hear, but rather my perception of the truth. Sometimes I am wrong, but I am willing to make a change when I am shown a better way. Too often, I find people who want to be combative rather than logically support their opinions. People will always hear my perception of the truth. **But I am not right all the time!**

**We will always try to help others!** No one goes through life without a little help. There have been many who have helped us over the years. This includes the employee, clients and total strangers. We have tried to extend a helping hand. There has never been a soldier in a uniform in a restaurant that I was frequenting that has had to pay for his/her meal since the Afghanistan or Iraq war. There has never been a youth group that asked for sponsorship that was turned down. We support United Way, American Cancer Society, American Diabetes, March of Dimes, Multiple Sclerosis and many others. Scholarships are handed out every year at the local high schools.

**Base Line Data, Inc. will always try to make money work!** When profits exist at the end of the year, it would be easy to say, I’m the owner, so this is my reward. **It doesn’t happen that way!** Profits are used to buy the latest new technology. We have the best equipment available. Each year we offer new technologies to our clients.

**We develop our workforce!** Every year and almost every week, we have training classes on how to use our wealth of equipment. Our people are in a constant state of training. Most have AutoCAD, UltraPipe, MicroSoft Word and Excel skills. We have recognized that a person not computer literate will not be able to handle the technology of tomorrow. In addition, they are being trained in PMI, Ultrasonics, Magnetic Particle, Liquid Penetrant, Eddy Current and Visual Testing. Those qualified to take their National Certification exams are being prepared and encouraged to participate.

**We protect our workforce!** This is not something we do because it’s mandated by OSHA, but rather something we do because of sincerely caring about our employees and their families. A man or woman injured cannot take care of their responsibilities.

**Looking back does have merit!** It allows you to recommit to the positive things of the past. Not everything that happened yesterday was broken. There are many things that we did well. Identifying these and making new resolutions for the future will drive us forward. **Now that we have assessed the past, let’s focus on the future and make it even better!**

## Training:

### CERTIFIED WELDING INSPECTION COURSE

The next course begins December 13th, 2004 Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. The location is Base Line Data, Inc., 206 Lang Rd., Portland, TX. The exam date is February 19th, 2005 @ the same location. There will be a pre-math tutorial offered for those students needing a little brush up. If you are interested or know of anyone interested, please contact J.W. Ralls or Juan Hernandez at (361) 643-3400. **All AWS applications are due by January 8, 2005.**

- All preparatory courses will start approximately 8 to 10 weeks prior to the examination date and applications must be submitted to the American Welding Society 6 weeks prior to the examination date. These courses will be conducted in the evenings.

### More CWI Tests Held at Base Line Data in 2005

#### TEST DATE

February 19, 2005  
April 16, 2005  
May 21, 2005  
July 23, 2005  
December 17, 2005

#### APPLICATION DEADLINE

January 8, 2005  
March 5, 2005  
April 9, 2005  
June 11, 2005  
November 5, 2005

### 2004 API-510 TEST

Applications are due 6 to 8 weeks before the exam. The next exam for the year will be December 1st, 2004. The night time course will start October 4th, 2004 and the daytime class will start November 1st, 2004. All daytime courses will be taught by O.T. Lewis from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and the night time courses will be taught by Larry Yell from 05:30 p.m. to 09:00 p.m. The API Application Deadline for the December exam is September 24, 2004.

### 2004 API-570 TEST

Applications are due 6 to 8 weeks before the exam. The next exam for the year will be December 1st, 2004. Night time classes will start around October 4, 2004 and daytime classes to start Nov. 15, 2004. All daytime courses will be taught by O.T. Lewis from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and night time courses will be taught by Mark Patterson from 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. The API Application Deadline for the December exam is September 24, 2004.

### SOS ULTRAPIPE COURSE

A SOS UltraPipe course will be conducted on October 25th, 2004 for entry level UltraPipe technicians. The course will last three days from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The instructor will be Joe Schomette from SOS. The application deadline is October 18th, 2004.

### OCTOBER AWS MONTHLY MEETING

The meeting will be held Thursday, October 21, 2004 at the Radisson Beach Hotel (North Beach) at 3200 Surfside Blvd. in Corpus Christi, TX @ 7:00 p.m. Speaker will be announced. We hope to see you there!

## Events/Important Information:

### MONTHLY LUNCHEON

**There will be no October monthly luncheon.** A Thanksgiving and Christmas Luncheon will be held in the appropriate months. If you would like to participate please call and talk to Jessica. Typically everyone brings something and we share alike. It might be a covered dish, chips or drinks. The company provides the meats and condiments.

**Christmas Party.** This year's Christmas party will be held at Howard's BBQ on Friday, December 10, 2004 beginning @ 7:00 p.m. There will be BBQ, dancing, drinks, and door prizes. Please RSVP to Jessica or Lindsay @ (361) 643.3400.

### SCHEDULING INFORMATION

All classes will be held at 206 Lang Road in Portland, TX unless otherwise noted. Please contact J.W. Ralls or Juan Hernandez @ (361) 643-3400, for pricing information and applications on all classes. \*\*Base Line Data, Inc. applications must be submitted three weeks prior to the start of the classes or examinations.

***Happy Birthday!*** Jimmy Villanueva, Mark Patterson, Steve Hunt, Robert Quinones, Kelly Edwards, and Trinity Thevenot.

***Congratulations*** to Mike Humphrey, Gary Burgess, Lee Marsh, Sammy Morales, Johnny Davis, Juan Hernandez and Tony Boyd. Each won a \$50.00 gift certificate to Academy or Home Depot. Mike and Gary won for safety and Lee, Sammy, Johnny, Juan and Tony won for job performance. You do get recognized!

***Congratulations*** to Trish Simmons on winning a \$50.00 gift certificate to the Home Depot. Trish submitted the article, "*People over 50 Should be Dead, Here's Why...*"

### ***IS IT FAIR?***

Since the beginning of the year, all I have heard from the refinery people is the large amount of profits that they're making this year. It has been explained to me that the only shutdowns that will take place are emergency turnarounds. The plants are going to run as hard as they can. One person in the know, explained to me that the first quarter, they made more than they expected to make in the whole year. He explained that this would continue for the entire year. With the cost of a barrel of oil there has been a justification to charge more for a gallon of gasoline. **If it is costing more to produce this gasoline, where are the profits coming from?**

A garage charges you approximately \$75.00/hr. for a mechanic to work on your car. A journeyman electrician charges in excess of \$65.00/hr. It's hard to believe that an inspector responsible for the safety of the environment, multi-million dollar facilities and the safety of hundreds of people's lives has a hard time getting \$40.00/hr. Typically, these inspectors carry two National Certifications.

A mechanic might have a SAE certification, an electrician has a Master's or Journeyman's NEC license and a plumber has a Master's or Journeyman's Plumbing license. An API-510, 653, 570 or CWI must have comparable experience and pass a National Certification test, but is invoiced many dollars less. **Is it fair?**

### ***MOTHERS LET YOUR CHILDREN GROW UP TO BE COWBOYS!***

Growing up in the fifties, we had our heroes such as Roy Rogers, Gene Autrey, the Lone Ranger and many others. Each of these cowboys always displayed ethical and honorable traits. You could find them riding the range hauling in cattle rustlers, bank robbers and savory characters. They weren't in it for money or recognition. They just fought for the justice of all. Greed applied to the bad guys, not to these guys with the white cowboy hats.

Several years ago, a song came out titled "Mothers Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys." Hogwash! There can be no more honorable profession than being a "real" cowboy. The real cowboy is always a gentleman. He opens the door for women and is willing to risk his life anytime a wrong is committed. He doesn't accept rewards for doing the right thing. He fights the bad guys for free. Now there are people who claim to be cowboys, but typically these fakes can be identified pretty easy. You just measured their actions. Action will always speak louder than words. A "real" cowboy lives for his honor and the goodness in his heart. I wish everyone would be a "real" cowboy. You would have less lawsuits, less greed and there would be men of honor walking amongst you. The world would be a greater place.

I'm ready to go back to that time when a handshake was as strong a contract as if it was written by a team of Philadelphia lawyers. You didn't have to wonder what a man was thinking. He made sure you knew exactly where he stood. He didn't brag or embellish, he just performed to your expectations. There's no school to learn this honorable occupation. You have to work at it every day. It starts with the family, but can be developed even with a poor upbringing. Mothers, I hope you change your mind and Let Your Children Grow Up To Be Cowboys! **We need them more than ever, today!**

#### ***Quotes of the Month***

"I am only one, but still, I am one. I cannot do everything but I can do something. And, because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do what I can." -- Edward Everett Hale, American clergyman and writer (1822-1909)

"Resentment is like taking poison and waiting for the other man to die." -- Malachy McCourt, Irish-American writer and actor (1931)

"Your perception of reality can be distorted by the smallest of things."

"The Constitution only gives people the right to pursue happiness. You have to catch it yourself."

**We Want to Hear From YOU!!!** Every employee is encouraged to submit information for publication in the newsletter. Each month a \$50 gift certificate to Academy or the Home Depot will be awarded to the participant with the best monthly article. Information can address: safety, recognition, updates, corporate news, labor relations issues, special events, etc. Please submit information to [lralls@bldata.com](mailto:lralls@bldata.com) or Fax us @ (361)643-8442.