

## A DIGGING IN THE DIRT COURSE!

March 11th, 2005 Base Line Data, Inc. invested in training six (6) people for Competent Excavation Training. It seems that every excavation that we are asked to enter, needs improvement. Some people think that these vertical walls won't shear off and bury them. They are deadly wrong. Texas is one of the leaders in fatalities due to excavation collapses. Nine out of ten people who are buried, die. Some with their heads above the level of the dirt. A person buried upright, takes an hour per foot of dirt cover to remove them. During this time, the diaphragm cannot function to allow the intake of oxygen. They suffocate!

No one has driven us to get this training. Normally we are in a situation where others are to provide the proper measure of protection. It would be nice if they did. What we see too often is the effort to make production first rather than the safety of the workforce.

We are considering putting all of our call-out technicians and other employees that need this training through this same Excavation Competency Person training. Many times the job calls for just one person to perform the task. They must evaluate and assess the excavation themselves. If we offer this course, we will use an outside consultant qualified to teach this material. We will also offer this training to other companies and clients. **We will continue to do everything we can to protect our most valuable commodity, our employee!**



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### Thoughts to Ponder!

- Freedom also includes the right to mismanage your own affairs.
- One threatens the innocent who spares the guilty.
- No man is wise enough or good enough to be trusted with unlimited power.
- A wise man makes his own decisions, an ignorant man follows the public opinion.

## *Please Don't Put Our Employees In a "IDLH" Situation!* NEW IDLH COURSE TO BE DEVELOPED!

The responsibility and liability for the safety of employees is the company that employs them. Too often we see clients putting these employees into Immediate Danger to Life and Health (IDLH) situations where they are not properly trained. These jobs are understood to mean having to use respiratory equipment to support life. Confined Spaces that have Nitrogen, H<sub>2</sub>S, Cyanide and other lethal gases are an example of this scenario. Many times respirators are used as a precautionary effort to ensure complete safety. Either case must be assessed. Sure, all of our employees have been respiratory fit tested and have passed the proper medical physical for wearing respirators, but have they been properly trained? It's too late to address this issue after there has been an accident.

Immediate Danger to Life and Health (IDLH) situations must be approved by the management of Base Line Data, Inc. We reserve the right to assess the situation, ensure that our people are comfortable with the job task and train them and ourselves to the degree of confidence in the equipment and personnel supporting them.

All "Baseliners" must recognize when these jobs are requested and notify Base Line Data management for approval. We take the safety and well-being of our employees seriously. We will not dictate to an employee that they must perform any job, if they have a concern. A complete comfort level must exist before this work can be performed.

Currently, we are looking at the feasibility of putting together a mock-up training program to assist us in this training. The training would be at our facility @ 206 Lang Road in Portland, TX. It would consist of rotating all personnel with the proper medical release and respiratory fit test through a live situation using a non-toxic gas such as air with an odor added. The hazards of not having a proper seal or removing a mask in an IDLH situation would be covered. Each employee would be trained in the use of a 30 minute MSA and 5 minute ELSA escape pack. At the end of the course, they would be given a test. Those successful enough to pass would be issued a "Special IDLH" certification. **Let's do all that we can to protect the workforce!**

## BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THIS IS A NORMAL DAY!

A normal day would consist of waking up at 03:30 am with or without an alarm clock. Walk to the kitchen to put on a pot of coffee. Go to my home computer room and crank up the old computer. Start planning the day on my "Things to Do List" and write a little for the "Baseliner". Start walking at 04:00 am and back at the house a little before 05:00 am. Pour a cup of coffee and work some more on the "Baseliner" and anything else that I didn't get done the day before. Shut the computer down around 06:15 am. Watch about 15 minutes of television news to stay up with current events. Take a shower and shave. Leave the house about 06:55 am for breakfast. Complete breakfast about 07:20 am and head to work. Arrive at 07:30 am and start working on bids or other things needing to be completed that day. 08:00 am the morning meeting starts. The things that we are going to try to accomplish that day are discussed. Safety issues that have come up are placed on the table whereas all can

learn from them. Yes, everyday we talk Safety! About 08:30 or 08:45 am the meeting is completed and everyone goes to perform their assigned work. From 08:45 am to 04:00 pm, I work on bids, procedures, client interfaces, classes that need to be developed, rate evaluations and a multitude of other company business. If I teach a class that night, I leave the office around 04:00 pm for a little R&R. I go back to the house and catch back up on the news. I leave the house about 04:50 pm to go back up to the office to start a class at 05:00 pm. I teach class until about 08:30 pm. I lock everything down and go home. If supper is made and if I decide to eat, I have a bite and then watch the news until about 09:30 pm. After that, you can find me fast asleep and sometimes before that. I usually receive two or three calls after I have gone to sleep that I take care of, and then go back to sleep. The next morning it starts all over again. This is a normal day.

## WHEN THE PRODUCT IS RIGHT, YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A GREAT MARKETER!

As a general rule, Base Line Data, Inc. functions without the need or use of a salesperson or a marketer. Oh yes, we have had sales people in the past, but they all seemed to be convinced that they were the main reason that Base Line Data, Inc. was continuing to grow. I don't believe that to be the case. Base Line Data, Inc. continues to grow because we have a select group of people that are convinced that each job that they perform must be the best that they can produce. The training that the Baseline receives makes them a well sought after commodity even with our competitors. We function as a team and each member is accountable for their brother and sister workers. Our clients have noticed our commitment. Many years ago, a wise man told me that you should never try to grow your company at a rate of more than 15% each year. We continue to use this rule and our growth has been a healthy one over the years. Our motto is, "We don't have to be the biggest, we just have to be the best." **When the product is right, you don't have to be a great marketer!**

### NOTABLE QUOTES!

*Whenever a man does the best he can, then that is all he can do!*

*Live as if you were living a second time and as though you had acted wrong the first time!*

*Putting off an easy thing makes it hard and putting off a hard one makes it impossible!*

*A wise man makes his own decisions, an ignorant man follows the public opinion!*

*Men are motivated and empowered when they feel needed. Women are motivated and empowered when they feel cherished!*

## AVOIDING CO-EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

Co-employment is an important issue for any company using long-term contractors. In 2000, Microsoft's \$97 million settlement for benefits liability to the contract workers who provided services from 1987 to 2000 raised co-employment awareness nationally. Co-employment is defined as "a relationship between two or more employers in which each has actual or potential legal rights and duties with respect to the same employee". In a single employer/employee relationship, the employer bears certain responsibilities to employees, which include paying wages, overtime pay, and taxes; providing worker's compensation, benefit and pension plans; and ensuring civil rights compliance, appropriate labor/management relations and a safe work site. In a co-employment situation, these responsibilities are shared.

Co-employment is inherent in the staffing firm/client relationship, since both have sufficient contact with an assigned employee, each company will be viewed as an employer. Generally, in this sort of relationship, the staffing firm is viewed as the "primary employer" and bears most of the responsibility for the employee.

Co-employment issues arise when the client company extends its control beyond the staffing firm/client division of tasks and takes on the role of the primary employer, as specified in the "common law" test. The common law test consist of a checklist of 20 criteria and can be used to identify the degree of behavioral and financial control a company has over an individual to determine employment status.

Up to this point, we have not seen an issue with co-employment situations, but I just recently received an employee evaluation with a client doing the evaluation. Although, I solicit the client's input, I would rather this be verbal than documented on a Base Line Data, Inc. Evaluation form. Base Line Data, Inc. employees work for a Base Line Data, Inc. supervisor. This supervisor should do the evaluation. While client day-to-day supervision may be unavoidable in the staffing firm/client relationship, it should be minimized when possible. There are many ways to minimize the risk of co-employment and these are but two. The internet is full of helpful hints, so lets avoid making lawyers rich and manage the risk. **The risk does exist!**

## THE BASE LINE DATA "ON-STREAMER"

**What is an "On-Streamer?"** Many people believe it is a person that is on the low end of the technical scale. You spend four (4) to eight (8) hours training him on a thickness gauge, put him out in the field with a meter, and for the next five to six years, he makes you money. We look at this individual a little bit differently. He is the eyes and ears of the engineer who must be accurately informed so solid decisions can be made. The "On-Streamer" must be able to look at the readings that he/she has taken and know whether they are believable or not. If not, he/she must recalibrate and take them again. We are proud of our "On-Streamers" and realize the importance of their job. We train them in Visual Testing, Field Sketching, AutoCAD, P&ID walkdowns, UltraPipe, the use of multiple Thickness Gauges, MT, PT, and absolutely Safety Awareness. Even though they may not have the required time, they are given the opportunity to take the API-570, API-653, API-510 and the CWI Preparatory courses. We encourage them to grow. The good ones will be the future of our company. I want to thank all of you "On-Streamers" for the job that you are doing.

## A BUSY APRIL!

We find ourselves working a little extra hard in the month of April. We have people going everywhere. We have forty people assigned to turnaround work in Oklahoma and about fifteen on a turnaround in Corpus Christi. In addition, we will be starting some new projects in Louisiana and are still trying to finish up some work completed in February. May starts another local turnaround and none of this is counting our day-to-day work. Classes are continuing and we are still growing people at an accelerated rate. We are expecting some more Marine Offshore opportunities in June and we will be sending 4-6 people to test on their API-UT examination at the end of April. The new raster scanning tank crawler should be in this month and we will adapt it to job applications. May will be our twentieth year in business and I'm thinking that we need to postpone our party to June or July. All that said, Barbara and I are going to celebrate the marriage of my daughter, Lindsay to Chris Beardsley on April 2nd, 2005. The big day is almost here!

## Don't Trust

A few weeks ago at a local refinery two refinery maintenance technicians and one contractor got seriously burned while changing out a valve on a helium line. The contractor was the valve company's representative, and was there to ensure that the valve was being installed correctly by the two company maintenance technicians. All safety procedures were followed for the installation and the valve was installed. The line was pressurized and a leak was found on the flange surface, so the line was depressurized, and the valve was taken out. A burr was found on the flange face. From this point forward safety was overlooked. Instead of testing the line for residual helium, the burr was just ground off. On top of that, the line, which should have been double blocked and bled; was not bled between the double block when the line was

shut down the second time. As soon as a spark was made by the grinder the helium ignited. Besides the safety precautions that were not followed, as a contractor I see another problem. We, as contractor, (I'm guilty of this too) rely on company personnel to know their company safety policies and often do not want to ask about or recommend extra safety steps to ensure the job is done safely. Every company has different policies and it's difficult to remember what all their regulations are, but if something doesn't seem right DON'T DO IT. Stepping back and using common sense when situations change can save lives. So don't rely on company personnel to always make the right decision, they are only human. Rely on no one but yourself with your safety.

### A GREAT GROUP OF GUYS & GIRLS!

As we all know that March brings us spring weather, St. Patrick's Day as well as Easter Sunday. Many people spend Easter Sunday with their family and friends as children enjoy the goodies from the Easter baskets they receive. For some children that may not be the case. The efforts of the Valero Volunteer Council with the help of many around Valero Energy Corporation-Corpus Christi Complex put together 57 Easter baskets for children as part of a program of the Salvation Army. The Baseline Group from Complex 8 did their part to help the council by donating Easter baskets for two boys and two girls. Everyone's effort brings smiles and joy to these children. The "Baseliners" of Complex 8 would like to wish everyone a safe and Happy Easter. The group consists of Oscar Benavides, Jimmy Villanueva, Rick Gonzales, Patty Mike-man, Darrell Riley, Chris Black, Arnold Flores, Abbey Pearson, Mike White, Rachele Hobbs, Garrett Seay, Justin Voelkel and Roger Rojas. Pictured: Anna Borrego & Cassandra Burdock; members of the Valero Volunteer Council.



### NCCER OPERATOR QUALIFICATION EXAM!

Waco Ware, Howard Mauch and Ed Soto have just completed the majority of their Operator Qualification exams. This exam is given to those that will be involved in pipelines. Most of our office support team have already started this process and will finish up within the next couple of months. If you have need for this training, please contact J.W. Ralls or Juan Hernandez @ (361) 643-3400.

## *Portrait of an Employee*

This man has been measured and found to be honorable. He doesn't fudge on his timesheet, he asks only to be paid for hours worked and he shoulders his parental responsibilities. He makes an all out effort to support every after hour job that comes along, even when he has other things to do. I wish we all could learn from him. I know that I have. He is the proud father of a new baby girl. I call him a "Baseliner" and it is easy to do so. He was born on February 12th, 1977 and resides in Portland, TX. He has been with the company since August 21st, 2000. We will continue to encourage him to be all that he can be. We will do our best to assist him in his growth. I see nothing but good things coming from him in the future. Too often, what I see is people that are so busy telling you how great they are and how bad someone else is that they forget what they are hired to do is a job. We need to be a "team" and supportive of each other. Even the competition! This person is not pretentious and he keeps you informed. I wish I had another ten just like him. If you haven't figured out who I am talking about, its Marcus Guerrero. Marcus, I appreciate you, I respect you and look forward to a long lasting working relationship. Thanks for all the help and for setting the example that only others can aspire too. **You are the encouragement that we all can learn from!**

## ***A TERRIBLE TRAGEDY!***

Wednesday, March 23rd, 2005, a massive explosion happened at the BP Refinery at Texas City, TX. Although, there was a statement posted on an Islamic Web site claiming responsibility for the blast, the FBI has dismissed this claim. There was 1,100 BP employees and 2,200 contract workers at the site performing a maintenance turnaround when the explosion occurred. Before the smoke cleared, it was noted that fifteen (15) people lost their lives and more than 100 were injured. Of the fifteen (15) killed, eleven (11) were employed by J.E. Merit Constructors Inc. and three (3) were employed by Fluor Corp. Four were women, with the rest being men. Jacobs CEO Noel Watson said that Jacobs was not performing any work on the unit that exploded, but "a number of our employees were meeting in a staff office trailer about 150 yards from that unit." The cause of the accident could take several months to determine.

Although this does not rival the massive explosion that took place April 16th, 1947, it is still very tragic. In 1947, 581 people were killed and 3,500 were injured. This was caused by a French ship Grandcamp, loaded with nitrate fertilizer exploding at the town's docks, leveling almost everything within 1500 feet.

Even those these are rare occasions and it has been noted over the years that you are more likely to get seriously injured at home, these things do happen. There are things that you can do to prevent unnecessary injury. Have a plan! Know what you are going to do, if there is an explosion, fire or chemical release. Know your plan of escape, know where the nearest fire extinguisher or safety shower is. Know the direction of the wind. Don't create sparks by the use of cell phones, pagers, grinders, welding torches or any other spark producing equipment, unless you are approved to do so. Metal against metal can create a spark and sometimes that's all it takes. Wear your four part meter everywhere you go. If it alarms, get out of the area and let someone know. It's better to err on the side of safety, than to have a serious incident happen.

I have worked in chemical and refineries all my adult life. I have seen fires, chemical releases and up to this point no explosions. When I was in Vietnam, I survived several close calls because I had a plan. If you don't have a plan, develop one. It's much too late when the situation occurs. The best safety tool that any man or woman will ever have is right between their ears. **Now use it!**

## *A NICE ROUND OF THANKS!*

It is always nice to get some encouraging news about your employees. I think with all of the negative things that must be said, we tend to forget how great a group of employees we have. From time to time one of our clients takes the time to report a compliment to our workforce, but rarely do we hear it from our competitors. Why, I don't know, but I do appreciate the comments that this inspector gave Johnny Grimes Jr. I believe we work especially hard when we are appreciated. Below is a letter submitted by Noby Coronado:

Mr. Ralls,

We had a need at Equistar Saturday night for a shear wave tech on a 20" S/S type 304H cracked weldment on one of our furnaces. The furnace had been removed from service for these repairs and we were all under the gun to return the furnace back to useful service (business is booming at Equistar/Lyondell after a 3 year lull).

I wanted to let you know that I called Johnny Grimes Jr. at his home, and asked if he was available to shear wave the repairs. I explained the situation to Mr. Grimes and he immediately accepted the task. If you remember the weather Saturday night, (3/19) I'm sure you will recall it wasn't very nice. Johnny drove from Portland clear across town to Equistar under severe thunderstorms, lightning, and flash flooding. When he arrived, I wasn't too sure what to expect from him considering the job at hand was five stories up on a structure, in a driving rain, at night.

The guy never missed a lick. He asked if everything was ready, donned a raincoat and took care of business. He never once complained. The job was completed with no incident, blinds were rolled and the furnace went back to cracking feed and making ethylene.

Johnny didn't have to do this job for me. He was at home with his wife and little 8 month old baby enjoying the evening. I could have called the BLD answering service but this job was a spur of the moment event and we needed someone right away. I got a hold of a BLD co-worker (Chris Beardsley) and he told me Johnny was the man for the job.

There are not too many Johnny's out there, people wanting to work, regardless of the situation, is a dying breed. I know you understand what I mean; we come from the same school. I see too many young inspectors today try to choose and pick their jobs. We never had that luxury. If you didn't want to work there were plenty of hands hanging on the fence waiting for an opportunity to be given a chance.

I worked several years with Johnny's Dad; I can see where his son learned his Dad's work ethic.

Thanks again to Johnny, to you, and to Baseline Date for a job well done.

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### ***BUILDING CHARACTER!***

*The things that we have done, the difficulties that we have encountered, the tragedies that we have endured can all be looked at as the building blocks of the character we present today to the rest of the world. Each one of us have walked different roads to get to where we are today. We have either let life make us cynical or have found a positive lesson in what we have seen. Hopefully, we have sought out the truth and found an encouraging lesson in every situation that we have coped with!*

## ***DON'T TREAT THEM LIKE A NUMBER!***

Have you ever worked for a person that treats you like a number? They don't care that your wife is in the hospital or that your kids are having trouble at school. You are a tool and as a tool you must be able to perform excellent every time. When you walk through that gate, you must leave all of your problems outside. This all sounds good, but isn't true! People are human beings and as humans, they can't turn off their problems just because they come to work. I believe that when you hire an employee, you also hire his mother, father, children, wife, husband and any other relatives that he might be concerned about. You deal with whatever baggage that he/she might possess. You can throw him away, but the replacement person might even be worse. Sure we all know what we're getting paid for and we must stay focused to prevent injuries. But we're not faucets that you merely turn on and off and the problems go away. We all have the same emotional highs and lows. When we deal with people that respect us and treat us well, we are on a high. Those things that tend to make us lose focus go away. When we work for people that treat us as a number, we are on a low. We don't perform to the level that we can. Whether you're an employer or a client, common respect will make a difference in a person's performance. **Don't treat them like a number!**

## ***BECAUSE YOU MIGHT THINK I DON'T NOTICE!***

Did you know that my son has never refused performing a job for me when I am having trouble getting someone to service a client? He has dropped his plans over and over again to take care of the needs of our client. No, I do not think it is fair to always have to go to him when no one else wants to perform a job. Now there are jobs that he can't perform, but if he could, I would probably ask him to do them. I believe the after hour work should be shared. We all knew that Base Line Data, Inc. was a service company when we hired in. That means that we have to support our clients 24-7. We don't get to pick and choose our jobs, we have to perform them when they come in. Sometimes that creates a little inconvenience, but the work must still be done. My son, like the other "go to guys or girls" need to be appreciated. I appreciate all of them. I do notice and my coordinators make me aware of the people that always have something else to do when asked to perform after hour work. We must service our clients when they call. In my past life, I have always worked with a group of guys that knew this. Those are the ones that stayed employed and have spent twenty plus years working for the same company that they support. For you "go to guys" that are always available, I do notice! **I want to thank each one of you for the effort you make in supporting the clients that feed us! THANK YOU!**

## ***WHAT DO YOU REALLY KNOW ABOUT THE PROCESS OF REFINING OIL?***

We are in the process of developing a course on Petroleum Refining For the Nontechnical Person. A good friend of mine gave me a book written by William L. Leffler concerning this subject. As I ventured through the book, I realized just how little I knew about the refining of oil. Sure I know welding, metals, nondestructive testing and carry multiple certifications, but I am limited on how the process refining equipment really works. We all come in contact with people that could tell us, but without knowing what questions to ask, we stay silent. **We need to change that!** Change comes from taking the first step. Our first step will be a twenty-four hour course on familiarization of Refinery Processes and Equipment. We will develop this course and first try it out on our office support people. If successful, we will introduce it to our field people that probably already know all of this. In either case, the more that we know about the piping and equipment systems that we are requested to inspect, the better job we can do. I am enthusiastically aware that we can make a difference through better training of our people. **As a team, let's make a difference!**

## **GROUND PENETRATING RADAR COURSE!**

John Ralls II, Larry Yell, Johnny Grimes Jr. and Juan Hernandez just completed a ground penetrating radar course on our new instrument. This course was conducted in Austin, TX on March 29th, 30th and the 31st.

Now that the course is complete, we will spend a certain amount of time becoming proficient in the use of our equipment. There will be other people and other levels of courses attended in the near future.

Ground Penetrating Radar is being used by the FBI to locate buried bodies underground, by the pipeline industry for locating underground pipelines, and depth of cover. It is also used by Civil Engineers and Maintenance people to locate thicknesses of slabs and rebar, conduit and post-tensioned cable in concrete slabs.

Give us a little time and we will be ready to service these types of projects. If interested, you can contact J.W. Ralls at (361) 643-3400 for more information.

## **OUR FIRST OMNI-SCAN EXAMINATION!**

We have just contracted out to do our first Omni-Scan examination of a Head to Shell weld on a reactor. This vessel is 0.750" thick with a diameter of 20'-0". It is estimated that this work will take one shift and the unit will leave a permanent record of the examination. We completed our hands-on training in March and the unit is already being requested. This unit allows a full recorded examination to be done in one pass. The world of Ultrasonic technology is continuing to advance and is allowing the acquisition of better and better data.

If you are interested in this type of examination, please contact J.W. Ralls @ (361) 643-3400 for more details.

### **THOUGHTS TO PONDER!-3/27/05**

Today more Americans are imprisoned for drug offenses than for property crimes!

The ancestor of every action is thought!

It's lack of faith that makes people afraid of meeting challenges and I believe in myself!

Pick battles big enough to matter, but small enough to win.

## **LIQUID PENETRANT COURSE**

We just completed another liquid penetrant (PT) course on the 23rd of March 2005. This course was for ASNT-SNT-TC-1A for Level I and II certification in Penetrant Testing. J.W. Ralls was the instructor. The students in attendance were: W.W. Randolph (Valero), Ron LeBlanc (Valero), Micah Spanutius, Robert Martinez, Billy Chandler, Ben Hernandez, Waco Ware, and Shawn Seelye with Base Line Data, Inc., and David McFadden, Ronald Sprabary, Temi Starks, George Saldivar, Manuel Meza, Jeff Freed. They all did exceptionally well!. We will be conducting a Magnetic Particle course within a month. Stay in touch to make sure that you can participate when it comes up.

## **ULTRASONIC THICKNESS COURSE!**

Lee Marsh just completed an Ultrasonic Thickness Course for the purpose of getting our new guys qualified for the use of the Panametric 36DL+. Even though they have now gone through the training and certification process, they will apprentice for a period of time with a seasoned pro. The students that participated in the process were: Micah Spanutius, Robert Martinez, Billy Chandler, Ben Hernandez, Waco Ware and Shawn Seelye. Several of the students already had background in the thickness gauge. Each student will be required to train in the use of multiple instruments and a large amount of other material before we turn them loose by themselves.

## **UPCOMING MAGNETIC PARTICLE COURSE!**

With luck we will be able to teach a full 24 hour Magnetic Particle course in the next thirty days or after the Valero-Ardmore & Citgo turnaround work is complete. Every UT technician is required to have training in UT thickness, MT, PT and Visual Testing (VT). We know the work we do is important and our people must be trained. If there is any plant technicians needing these courses, we could possibly rotate them at this time to get this training. Please contact J.W. Ralls to discuss this at (361) 643-3400.

## ***IT'S A MATTER OF FAITH!***

I believe that any job can be done safely. I believe that when people take the time to prepare, ask themselves what questions and have the right safety attitude, accidents will go away. Accidents do not just happen, there is something that has been overlooked, someone makes a mistake or enough thought has not been put into the planning of the work. Last year in 2004, Base Line Data, Inc. was the principal inspection company conducting inspections at EquiStar in Corpus Christi, TX. EquiStar made safety their number 1 priority. Each company was requested to buy into this concept. Safety briefings were held each day before the start of field work. Each worker regardless of what company he represented were empowered to not perform any task that he/she did not feel comfortable with. There was no penalties or repercussions for identifying or refusing to perform a task. These conditions were reviewed and a safe alternate was found. The turnaround's safety record absolutely showed that this approach accomplished it's purpose. I am taking it as a matter of faith that all of our clients have the same wishes. I was raised up through the E.I. Dupont safety programs, "where all accidents can be prevented." You have to get the whole workforce believing in this concept and then implementing it with action. You have to check each situation out yourself. **Its then just a matter of faith!**

## ***ANOTHER API-UT EXAMINATION!***

On the last week of April, Base Line Data, Inc. will send four people to take their Nationally recognized API Ultrasonic examination for API-UT certification. Presently, we have two ultrasonic technicians ,Jesse Torres and Marcus Guerrero that have met this certification requirement. We would like for all our technicians to get this certification. The technicians scheduled for this examination will be Jesse Rios, Ronald Rios, Johnny Grimes Jr. and Joey Dominique.

## ***WHEN WILL WE LEARN?***

It seems like over and over again, the same thing happens. You would think that people would pay attention to what's happening around them and do something about it. People would rather be the life of the party than to do the responsible thing. About a week ago, a good friend of mine and his female x-ray technician were having to work Saturday morning because of some turnarounds in the Houston area. Both completed their work and were able to leave around noon time. As they both said goodbye to each other, neither realized that a tragic incident would happen later that evening. A little later that evening, a motorist under the influence of alcohol came up the wrong way of a ramp and plowed head on into this young lady. She didn't have a chance and died because of one selfish, stupid act. Alcohol once again took an innocent life. Now I drink and I don't necessarily believe that all alcohol should be banned. I believe you have a group of people similar to myself that can drink, but still do the responsible thing. In Europe, children are taught to drink wine at a very young age. Their DWI laws are considerably more strict than our own.

Everyone likes to have a good time. One drink can lead to another and there is always someone wanting you to just stay a little longer. Be strong and know when to say enough is enough. Ask a friend that is sober to drive you home, call the wife or husband or call me. I would rather have to be inconvenienced and do the right thing, than to pick up the paper the next morning and read about another senseless accident. Now I don't think that all of sudden you're going to stop drinking, but if I have made just one of you think, I have accomplished my purpose. We must all do the right thing. Let's not kill an innocent person.

***If you drink, don't drive!***

## ***DO IT AGAIN, PEPAU!***

These words are magical words to my ears. My grandson, Kavendar rocks my world. He can do no wrong. Sure I know that's not true and I'm sure that his mother and father would conflict with me on that statement, but at this point in his life, I believe he's perfect. He comes into the room and I forget my chain of thought. I might have twenty people there, but for a few seconds, I have no other thought, but for him. He has no fear. He walks around the room and acts like he owns it. He commands a lot of attention. Frank Trevino can agitate him about as good as anyone. If Kavendar has some cookies or something else to eat, Frank will act like he's going to eat them. The quick response back from Kavendar shows that he will stand up for what's his. Next year, he's mine! That's what I keep telling his mother. I'm sure she thinks that I am going to teach him those things that will get him in trouble, but she would be wrong. I didn't know my grandfather or father. I don't want Kavendar to have to go through that same thing. Grandfathers and grandmothers are many times the buffer between the parents and the child when they decide to fly. Absolutely, parents will lose control of their children at about thirteen years old. As Kahlil Gibran wrote, children are like the arrow drawn back from the bow. Once the arrow is released, they become subjected to the winds and aim of the archer. I want to help aim him in the right direction.

When I finish my morning meeting, my final interface with Kavendar before he goes off to school is the "superman" game. He comes running up to me and his small voice, I can hear him say, "superman Pepau." I know exactly what he wants. He wants me to launch him up into the air and catch him. After doing this about five or six times, I set him down to catch my breath. Once again, I hear his little voice, "Do it again, Pepau!" **For a fact he gets his way.**

## **CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?**

We have become so greedy, that we will do anything to win. I remember the days when I coached Little League Baseball. My kids had already given up the sport to focus in on soccer. This became the love of their life. I had no children playing, but I enjoyed working with kids so much, that I continued to volunteer where there was a need. Baseball was a place that I enjoyed. The first season went reasonably well and I believe we placed 2nd overall. The following year, armed with new determination, we started our practice. The kids worked real hard. I could tell we were going to have a good team. Never because I was a good coach, but rather because I was able to motivate them to be their very best.

The first game we probably lost and with kids, that's always the possibility. If you could get them over their hype and just play the game you could be successful. We made it through the first half of the season and started the second. Then the rains came. We cancelled two games and agreed that we would make them up before the end of the season. We started playing ball. The team was getting stronger each game. At the end of the season, we were in second place, but we still had two games to make up. With a win of just one, we would be tied for first place. With a win of both, we would be the clear cut winner of first place. The politics started. One of the board members had a son on the 1st place team. A week before the end of the season, all make-up games were cancelled and whoever was in first place at that time was declared the winner. It wasn't fair, but we became the 2nd place team. I retired after that season.

When you look at the extremes that major league baseball players will go through to break a record or sustain a winning season, it makes you wonder why. Win at all cost has become the rule rather than the exception. Our children's mentors encourage our youngsters use of drugs and steroids. Forget that we are teaching our children, that winning by cheating or any means available is an acceptable practice. Think about the harm that so many have done to their bodies just to be considered winners. Winning or breaking records without honor is no win at all. Let's clean up the sport and disqualify these people from playing for the rest of their lives! Only then can our children learn that there are rules that we all must follow. **Let's bring Honor back!**

**Training:****CERTIFIED WELDING INSPECTION COURSE**

The next course begins March 21st, 2005 Tuesdays and Thursdays 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 May 21st, 2005 @ the same location. 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 April 9th, 2005.** All preparatory courses will be conducted in the evenings and start 8 to 10 weeks prior to the examination date.

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

<b><u>TEST DATE</u></b>	<b><u>APPLICATION DEADLINE</u></b>
May 21, 2005	April 9, 2005
July 23, 2005	June 11, 2005
December 17, 2005	November 5, 2005

**2005 API-510 TEST**

**Applications are due 6 to 8 weeks before the exam.** The next API-510 exam will be **June 1, 2005**. A daytime course will be taught by O.T. Lewis May 9th to May 13th from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. **The API Application Deadline for the June exam is March 29th, 2005.** The nighttime course will be taught April 4, 2005-May 30th, 2005 from 5:00 p.m.- 8:00 p.m.

**2005 API-570 TEST**

**Applications are due 6 to 8 weeks before the exam.** The next API-570 exam will be **June 1, 2005**. A daytime course will be taught by O.T. Lewis May 23rd to May 27th from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. **The API Application Deadline for the June exam is March 29th, 2005.** The nighttime course will be taught April 4, 2005-May 30th, 2005 from 5:00 p.m.- 8:00 p.m.

**BERWANGER ULTRAPIPE COURSE**

Another Berwanger UltraPipe course will be conducted in the second quarter of 2005. This will be an entry Level UltraPipe course. The course will last three days from 08:00 a.m. to 05:00 p.m. The instructor will be Joe Schomette from Berwanger.

**IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS COURSE**

Within the next couple of months an “**Improve Your Writing Skills**” Course will be held in Corpus Christi, TX. This course is designed to make your writing more effective. If you are interested, please contact J.W. Ralls or Juan Hernandez @ (361) 643-3400.

**MAGNETIC PARTICLE LEVEL I & II COURSE**

At the conclusion of the Ardmore/Valero and the Citgo Turnaround a “**Magnetic Particle**” will be held at our 206 Lang Road Facility in Portland, TX. The course will be from 08:00 am to 05:00 pm and will last for three (3) days. If you are interested, please contact J.W. Ralls or Juan Hernandez @ (361) 643-3400.

**PROPOSED VISUAL TESTING (VT) COURSE PLANNED**

Within the next couple of months a “**Visual Testing**” Course will be held at our 206 Lang Road Facility in Portland, TX. The course will be from 08:00 am to 05:00 pm. If you are interested, please contact J.W. Ralls or Juan Hernandez @ (361) 643-3400.

**8 HOUR ULTRASONIC THICKNESS MEASUREMENT COURSE PLANNED**

Within the next couple of months an “**8 Hour Ultrasonic Thickness**” Course will be held at our 206 Lang Road Facility in Portland, TX. The course will be from 08:00 am to 05:00 pm. If you are interested, please contact J.W. Ralls or Juan Hernandez @ (361) 643-3400.

**PIPELINE OPERATOR QUALIFICATION (OQ) TESTING**

We are currently performing on-line NCCER Pipeline Operator Qualification Testing at our 206 Lang Road Facility in Portland, TX. If you are interested, please contact J.W. Ralls or Juan Hernandez @ (361) 643-3400.

**EXCAVATION COMPETENCY PERSON TRAINING**

Within the next couple of months when things slow down, Base Line Data, Inc. will contract out a course for Excavation Competency Person Training. We will start to put all of our field technicians through this course. If you are interested, please contact J.W. Ralls or Juan Hernandez @ (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 info. 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!* Joe Villanueva, Paul Westbrook, Frank Trevino, Jesse James, Jerry Barker, Moo Adkins, Barbara Ralls

### *WE MUST STOP THIS INSANITY!*

It seems like every week, we are bombarded with the news that another child has been sexually assaulted and killed. Sexual predators and pedophiles surround us. We try to rehabilitate these people in prison, but it seems to have no long term effect. Megan's Law had some effect in identifying those that have committed this crime and where they lived. Although it was a good attempt, it hasn't stopped all. A judge several years ago tried to have signs placed in these people's yards identifying that a convicted sexual predator lived there, but I believe he was over-ruled.

I believe it is time to make some serious changes. Either keep them in jail forever, castrate them or place a GPS locater on them for the rest of their life. I don't want to turn on the news or pick up a paper and read about another one of these heinous crimes. **Let's do what we must to protect our children!**

### *DID YOU KNOW?*

In the early days of Pennsylvania crude oil production, petroleum was primarily a substitute for whale oil used as lamp oil for indoor lighting. If a kerosene fraction had too much sulfur, it would have an unacceptable smell when burned. The method originally used in the Pennsylvania oil fields to determine if the kerosene was suitable for shipping to the New York and Philadelphia markets was to taste it. If the taster thought it was sweet, it passed; sour, it was rejected for having too much sulfur.

Oil was initially shipped to market by wagon or flatcar in used 50-gallon wine barrels. To allow for spillage during transportation, payment at the destination was for only **42 gallons**. Receivers still pay on that basis. Shippers soon learned to ship that way too. Consequently, we now have the 42 gallon barrel. In Europe, much is done in tonnes.

### *HELP ME UNDERSTAND?*

I believe in a "living will." My sister who died from a brain aneurism had one. She died one day in Wyoming while her husband was doing contract work at a gas facility. By the time she arrived at the hospital, she was being kept alive by machines. My two nieces arrived as soon as they could get there from Mississippi and Louisiana. After each had time to say their goodbyes, the machines were turned off and she passed away within a few minutes. This all happened because my sister had planned ahead.

With so much rhetoric being passed around in Florida, I'm not sure who to believe. Some doctors and all the courts state that she is in a "vegetable" state. There is no hope for any recovery. Her brain waves are "flat." Others say that's not true.

Although, I would not like to be kept alive, if there was no hope, I have to go back to another story. Several years ago, my brother had a heart attack and was in a hospital in Victoria, TX. The doctors had come out and told the family that there was no hope. My brother had had irreversible brain damage and his brain waves were flat. My sister-in-law operating on these facts signed a "do not resuscitate order." If he would have had another heart attack, then they were giving permission to not restart his heart. They would just let him die. **God had spoken, there was no hope for him!**

Guess what, several days later, he came out of this coma and his mind is excellent. He can walk, talk and reason out just as well as he did before he had his heart attack.

Now I know that all of powers to be have spoken, but I for one would relinquish the power of guardianship to the parents. They have hope and if you're going to err, then lets err on the side of life. **God will make the final decision!**