

I WANNA GO HOME!

As we struggle to complete our out of town work, I can't help but think of those young men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each day brings on the same forlorn feelings, wanting to go home. I have been one of those soldiers when I served in Vietnam for fifteen (15) months. We used to have a yearly "short-timers" calendar that we colored in each day for the remaining time left on our stay. It seemed like we would never get the whole thing colored in. Then we awoke one morning and had only one day left to be colored in. There was an end! The last day was such a joyous occasion.

I see the same thing with people who are out on the road away from their families and loved ones. You get to the point where you don't care about the extra money, you just want to go home. You must stay focused on the completion of the job. You must concentrate on the safety aspects of the job that you are doing. Many people chance getting injured in their last few days before rotating out. Some companies have a fourteen-day rule where you have to take off at least one day, every fourteen days. This helps get people re-focused. I hear some complain about it and others praise the break. I think it's probably a good idea.

There is an old saying, that goes something like this, "Nothing is forever!" There is an end to every situation, you just have to be patient for it to come. It will never come as quickly as you would like. You will wake up one morning and it will be your last day of work. You can pack your bags, check out of the motel and start the process of going home. Until that day, stay focused on the job at hand, stay amiable to your co-workers and continue to do the best job that you can. I understand the desire of "I want to go home!"



IT MUST BE CHRISTMAS, LOOK AT ALL THESE NICE TOYS!

I just completed a trip to Dallas looking over all the new toys displayed at the annual AWS convention. This is an annual sabbatical I take to stay up to date with the latest technology in welding. I normally sit for one-eight hour course and this year, it was an overview of MT, PT, RT and UT. There seems to always be something new that I learn.

If you're interested in welding, it's a good show to go to. You get to see it all at one location. I'm not sure whether I will buy anything, but there were a few things that I was interested in. I have looked for several years now at a new software program called "C-Spec". It seems to be a very good program for ASME Section IX and AWS D1.1 Welding Procedure and Welder Performance documentation. It has some nice bells and whistles. There are some things that I would like for it to do and if I can prove this up, I will probably add this program to our list.

I use these trips as a mini-vacation. Even though I'm still working, it's nice to get away for a few days. I believe its also a nice vacation for the people at the office who have to support me when I'm there. I'm not the easiest person to support when I have to rush for things to be done. I will kick, push and over-emphasize until these things are done. I missed you guys and am glad to be home.

THANK YOU!

I want to take the time to thank Fred Cimo and Jerry Seay for their help and assistance on two recent turnarounds. Both kept me filled in and helped manage the work in Ardmore, OK and Corpus Christi, TX. The success of both jobs were due to their efforts and the rest of the workforce. Thanks to the whole group for a job well done!

TAKE CARE OF YOUR EQUIPMENT!

*IF YOU HAVE A GOOD TOOL, BUILD
A SHED OVER IT AND PROTECT IT!*



Recently, an Innov-X was broken because it was laid on top of a scaffold where other work vibrated it off. It fell about five (5) feet. At least three 4 part personal meters have been stolen or lost during two recent turnarounds. Several Safety Harnesses have gone missing. Most of this is thought of as “chump” change, but it’s actually about seven to eight thousand dollars worth of lost or damaged equipment. It calculates out to what four raises would cost in a year.

The frightening thing is the attitude. These are the things that we use to make a living or protect ourselves with. Without good tools, in good repair, we cannot perform our work. Without the safety equipment needed, we chance injury. The monetary impact is rarely

just the cost of the equipment, but rather the inability to perform a task when requested or the protection of our workforce. The loss to our credibility or reputation far outweighs any other cost.

We must take care of our equipment. Each one of us is individually accountable for the tools that we have checked out in our name. We are also accountable for the tools that the company uses for its livelihood.

Because we have several more on the shelf does not relieve ourselves from the responsibility of securing or reporting any tools that might be broken. **We have good tools and we must take care of them and build a shed over them for protection!**

ANOTHER TESTING TOOL!

As mentioned in the May newsletter, we lost a job because both of our Magnetic Flux Leakage Units were being used. The client could not wait for us to perform this work. This doesn’t happen often, but it does happen. I committed to not letting this happen again because of a \$46,000 MFE unit. Base Line Data, Inc. is considered the “go to” company for any large, non-destructive examination jobs or for our client’s higher end inspection needs. We furnish NDE technicians, CWI’s and many other types of inspection coverage to the construction contractors that don’t have the personnel to satisfy the client’s



requirements. **I know, as my clients know, who they go to when they need help.** We have over fifty (50) different types of services that we provide our clients. We invest our profits back into our employees and the equipment that makes us support the work requested by our clients. We placed an order for a new MFE 2412 Mark II Tank Floor Scanning System and it arrived the week of May the 9th. Our new Silverwing raster scanning tank crawler should be in within the next couple of weeks. If you have a “specialty” need, call us. You’ll be surprised at all the services we provide!

NEW ACFM LEVEL II CLASS BEING PLANNED!

We were very disappointed when we found out another ACFM class was planned for the month of May. Because of our work load, we were not going to be able to send anyone. While at the AWS show in Dallas, I found out that this class did not make and it will be rescheduled later in the year. We have six people that completed their Level I training and I plan on sending them back for this second class. ACFM examinations are being conducted in place of Liquid Penetrant and Magnetic Particle testing. The material normally can be tested in the “as is” condition. This saves the time normally created by the cleaning.

HYDROFLUORIC ACID-(HF)

A recent industrial accident in the area with hydrofluoric acid forces me to write this article. I have some past experience with this acid and it can be very dangerous. You will never see many acid burns more terrible looking. I did an initial and follow-up inspection on process equipment after an industrial HF accident in Mexico. It left several people dead and many others injured. Most of these injuries were from inhalation. Working in refineries and chemical plants, we must always think the unexpected. Don't blindly trust anyone! Check it out yourself and take the extra precaution. Disassembling valves or cutting into lines can leave you exposed. Anything you touch in an operating area can contaminate you. I have seen people burned with hydrofluoric acid when they removed process tubing from a dumpster or when a pump seal let go. Protect yourself by arming yourself with knowledge. Know what to do if you become contaminated with this material. Listed below is information readily available on the internet:

Hydrofluoric Acid is a highly corrosive solution of the chemical compound hydrogen fluoride in water. Pure hydrogen fluoride is often called anhydrous hydrofluoric acid.

PRODUCTION

Industrially, hydrofluoric acid is produced from the mineral fluor spar, also known as calcium fluoride and concentrated sulfuric acid. When combined at 250° C, these two substances react to produce hydrogen fluoride. The vapors from this reaction are a mixture of hydrogen fluoride, sulfuric acid and a few minor byproducts, from which hydrogen fluoride can be isolated by distillation.

Hydrofluoric acid's ability to dissolve oxides makes it

important in the purification of both aluminum and uranium. It is also used to etch glass, to remove surface oxides from silicon in the semiconductor industry, as a catalyst for the alkylation of iso-butane and butene in oil refineries and to remove oxide impurities from stainless steel in a process called pickling. Hydrofluoric acid is also used in the synthesis of many fluorine-containing organic compounds, including teflon and refrigerants such as freon.

SAFETY

In the body, hydrofluoric acid reacts with calcium and magnesium ions and can disable organs whose proper function depends on these metal ions. Exposure to hydrofluoric acid may not be initially painful and symptoms may not occur until several hours later, the acid begins to react with calcium in the bones. If left untreated, hydrofluoric acid exposure can result in severe or even lethal damage to the heart, liver, kidneys and nerves.

Exposure of less than 10% of the body can be fatal, even with immediate medical treatment. Highly concentrated solutions may lead to acute hypocalcemia, followed by heart attack and death and may be fatal in as little as 2% body exposure.

Exercise good judgment when working in areas that contain hydrofluoric acid. Wear all the required Personal Protection Equipment (PPE). Be suspicious of all puddles, drips or sprays. Verify and double check anytime that you are required to break into a line or valve for maintenance purposes. Think the unexpected! If thought to be contaminated with hydrofluoric acid remove all clothing and flush affected area for at least fifteen (15) minutes with water and get medical attention.

AN INCREASE IN HOSPITALIZATION INSURANCE PREMIUMS!



Base Line Data, Inc. and its employee's family coverage hospital insurance premiums will go up an estimated 13%. We looked at other insurance companies, but for the same coverage the premiums were much higher. We could have lowered the benefits and probably kept the premiums at the same rate, but that would leave the employee with more out pocket cost for a claim. We struggle each year trying to keep insurance cost down. We currently spend about \$600,000 a year to do business. This relates to having to do about \$6,000,000 worth of business at a 10% return a year just to pay for the insurance. **It is the single, most costly part of business other than labor!**

SHOWING RESPECT!

Recently, a story was given to me concerning a “Baseliner” not showing respect to another contractor. I was very disappointed to hear this being as I believe everybody deserves respect. Respect should be something always given. I feel that there is no one in our organization that I’m better than. I may own a multi-million dollar organization, but the real credit goes to all of the hard working people that support the system. Everyone is equally important. Everyone has something to give and if they are giving the best they can, I’m satisfied. Having more certifications, performing quality assurance for the client or being able to flex your muscles around a lesser paid person doesn’t impress me. “Baseliners” and contractors might have different duties, but we are all important to the mission in front of us. If you don’t remember what that is, “it’s getting the job done.” My brother use to have a saying that went something like this, “it’s the same rungs down the ladder, that you step on when you climb up the ladder”. I think he was trying to say that if your kicked the water boy because you could, you might have to go get your own water the next time. I like to hear people complain about having to do some undesirable job and who they have to work with. Guess who I’m going to make sure they work with on the next undesirable job. We need to support each other and that means the contractors we work with. Work is getting the job done in a safe, quality and efficient manner. **It doesn’t take much effort to show a little respect and it’s always nice to have someone there to help you pull the wagon!!**

How Can You Perform All of These Services Well?

We purchase new equipment and train a few key people to operate it. Once they come up to speed, develop their confidence, we then make sure they pass our standards. We then take other people and train behind the initial group. It is actually an apprentice program. Each qualified technician trains the next group of people coming up. Each technician then becomes a teacher. We share the knowledge! Each person is accountable for the next generation of inspectors. All become multi-tasked. So when you’re looking for a group of ten NDE crews to perform a “hot job”, we normally can provide them. **Training and more training makes us supportive and responsive to our client’s needs!**

Sometimes It’s Best To Leave Well Enough Alone!

An old Indian chief sat in hut on the reservation, smoking a Ceremonial Pipe and eyeing two US government officials sent to interview him.

“Chief Two Eagles, maybe you can help us in answering this question, where did the white man go wrong?” “You have observed the white man for over 90 years. You’ve seen his wars and his technological advances. You’ve seen his progress, and the damage he’s done.”

The Chief nodded in agreement. The official continued. “Considering all these events, in your opinion, where did the white man go wrong?”

The chief stared at the government officials for over a minute and then calmly replied, “When the white man found the land, Indians were running it. No taxes, no debt, plenty of buffalo, plenty of beaver, women did all the work, medicine man free, Indian man spent all day hunting and fishing, all night having s**.”

Then the chief leaned back and smiled, “**Only white man dumb enough to think he could improve a system like that.**” -*This article is dedicated to my adopted mother (Sharon Palmer) who claims to have Indian blood, but surely she has forgotten the ways of the squaw.*

You Got To Love This Country!

Only in America...do drugstores make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front.

Only in America...do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries and a diet coke!

Only in America...do banks leave both doors open and then chain the pens to the counter.

Only in America...do we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in the driveway and put our useless junk in the garage.

Only in America...do we buy hot dogs in packages of ten and buns in packages of eight.

Only in America...do we use the word “politics” to describe the process so well: ‘Poli’ in Latin meaning ‘many’ and ‘tics’ meaning ‘bloodsucking creatures’.

Only in America...do they have drive-up ATM machines with Braille lettering.

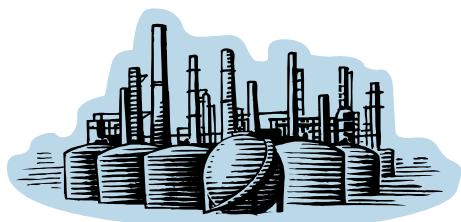
Portrait of an Employee

He was born in January of 1958 and his birthday is within one day of my own. He has worked for the company 3,982 days, but whose counting. He has always been supportive of the company and our clients. He goes to work everyday and never shirks his responsibility. If you need a little extra, he's always there to help pull a little harder. He recently stepped up to the plate, organizing and helping coordinate the needs of a turnaround. He did an excellent job. I am very proud of him. Although I might not say it enough, it is great having good employees like Jerry Seay. People like Jerry make Base Line Data, Inc. look good. I wish I had another dozen like him. Thanks for a job well done!

ARE WE GETTING TO WHERE WE WANT TO BE?!

I try to spend everyday accomplishing something positive. I set goals for myself and also the people around me. Take Dad for instance, if he can only wake up and struggle into work, he feels like he has accomplished his goals. Accomplishment for him is when he can remember two things at the same time. Now some of us have higher expectations than that. We don't want to be the living dead! To know where you want to be, you first you have to know where you are at. That is a real problem for some. You better get busy. You don't have as many days left than you think.

ANOTHER API-UT EXAM



During the week of April 25th, 2005, four "Baseliners" took their National API-UT Certification exam. This is a certification you earn by being able to correctly & ultrasonically evaluate sample test welds. The test is conducted by the American Petroleum Institute. Jesse Torres and Marcus Guerrero have already passed this examination. I mentioned only three in last months newsletter because it looked like one wasn't going to be able to get free because of a shutdown. As it turned out four were able to go. They were Joey Dominique, Jesse Rios, Johnny Grimes, Jr. and Ronald Rios. All of these people carry other National certifications such as CWI's, API-510 and API-570's. Very few people have earned the right to the API-UT certification. Although the results are not in, we are very proud of them for making the attempt. This is a very expensive process to nationally qualify our people in ultrasonics, but we think it's worth the effort. **We will continue to grow our people!**

ANOTHER NICE LETTER FROM A CONTRACT INSPECTOR IT'S NICE TO HEAR GOOD THINGS ABOUT THE TEAM!

J.W.,

This is Kenneth Adams, I am still here in Ardmore and probably will be till Saturday. I just wanted to thank you again for the job and let you know you have some top notch people: Robert Quinones, Fred Cimo and Becky Gaydos. They made the job enjoyable. It was rumored to me that you had some 510 work in Hawaii soon. I do not have anything lined up until the fall, so please let me know if you need personnel.

Thanks,
Kenneth
API-510, 570, CWI

THANKS!

Although, we reported this turnaround as completed in the May issue, it is just wrapping up. This shutdown was at Citgo Refinery in Corpus Christi, TX and all in all it was very successful. A big round of thanks to Jerry Seay, Johnny Grimes Jr., Jesse Torres, James Shores, George McCarthy, Marty Kuykendall, Howard Mauch, Billy Chandler, Rudy Pena, Don Nava, Rick Garcia, Katy Lashley, Justin Voelkel, Richard Benoit, Tony Tagle, Joey Dominique, Jesse Rios, Marcus Guerrero, Clay Ford, Paul Westbrook, Ed Soto, Joe Gonzalez, Jesse James and Johnny Davis, and Waco Ware. A successful turnaround for us will always be measured by the outcome of our safety performance. Guys, thanks for focusing in on this most important part of our job. **Safety!**

PROTECTING YOUR TOOLS THROUGH INNOVATION!

Recently, the damage to several tools have forced us to put our “thinking caps” on. One Panametric 36DL+ screen was destroyed when a heavy object was dropped on it and an Innov-X was damaged when it dropped about five feet off of a scaffold.

We have cut a plexi-glass insert piece to go in front of the display screens of both DMS’s and the Panametric 36DL+’s. This gives the screen an extra layer of protection. These are available in our tool check out room.

We have purchased holsters for our Innov-X’s with an attachment lanyard that keeps the instrument from being dropped more than about four feet. The holster is equipped with a belt, fasteners to keep the instrument in the holster, attachment lanyard and **will** be worn at anytime the equipment is used. This is the same type of lanyard that is secured to many police officer’s pistol to keep it from accidentally being dropped.

We have found the solution, now let’s make sure that we’re smart enough to use them!

DEDICATION!

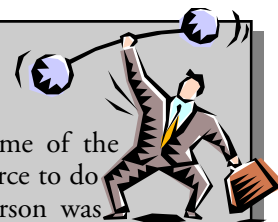
Recently, during an outage, I saw the type of dedication that some people have toward family, friends and company. I believe this emphasizes the true making of a “Baseline.” This individual was suffering from a sickness that most people would have stayed in bed with. I received a call suggesting that if I could find someone to relieve him Saturday night, he would appreciate it. He stated that he could make Friday night, but wasn’t sure about Saturday.

I tried to reach a person we had scheduled to replace this person on Sunday night. The sick individual was going to be replaced Sunday night so he could start another turnaround Monday morning. After multiple calls trying to reach the replacement person, I called this inspector back and let him know that as of that time, I hadn’t succeeded in reaching his replacement. The replacement person was a contract inspector and no one had gotten a contact phone number from him.

Billy Chandler, knowing the gravity of inspection coverage during a turnaround, elected to stay on the job until relieved. He did go to the doctor and was treated for a bronchitis infection. A few antibiotics and he is on the road to recovery.

Although, my desires would have been to see Billy stay home and recover, I want to thank him for his dedication. **Base Line Data, Inc. needs people with the commitment to make the difference!**

OVERLOADING THE WORKFORCE!



A recent turnaround uncovered some of the shortcomings of asking your workforce to do too much. A Quality Control person was being asked to perform not only the quality control function of his company, but also the safety monitoring of the workforce. Even though we all must perform in the safety arena, this left weld mapping, documentation and many other things not accomplished. I believe, if you’re not careful, you can leave your workforce so stretched, they can’t accomplish the task you’ve asked them to do, effectively. Both Safety and Quality are important issues. They go hand in hand. Poor quality can leave a facility on the brinks of a safety catastrophe. Let’s all wake up and make sure that we don’t ask our workforce to do more than they have the time to perform well. A successful job is one done well!

THE QUALITY OF A MAN OR WOMAN!

The quality of a man or woman will always be measured by their actions. Irregardless of what a person says, measure their actions and it becomes very clear what type of a person they are. I believe my son has had an opportunity to see the real quality in a person recently. It surprised him! This was a great “life” lesson for him. His reaction to this made me very proud of him. Son, stay true to your conviction! Its light will lead you because it will always shine the brightest!

GOOD ADVICE, BUT AS ALWAYS, THE CHOICE IS YOURS!

Recently, my niece Marsha Ralls spent an evening with Melinda, the wife of Bill Gates for the Economic Club in Washington, D.C. From that meeting a Bill Gate's High School address was shared that has some real value. Now for you who don't know who Bill Gates is, he is one of the richest people in the United States and co-founder of Microsoft. The address was about eleven (11) things that you did not and will not learn in high school. Listed below are those things:

- 1) Life is not fair - get used to it!
- 2) The world won't care about your self-esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something **BEFORE** you feel good about yourself.
- 3) You will **NOT** make \$60,000 a year right out of high school. You won't be a vice-president with a car phone until you earn both.
- 4) If you think your teacher is tough, wait till you get a boss.
- 5) Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity. Your Grandparents had a different word for burger flipping - they called it opportunity.
- 6) If you mess up, it's not your parent's fault, so don't whine about your mistakes, learn from them.
- 7) Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes and listening to you talk about how cool you thought you were. So before you save the rain forest from the parasites of your parent's generation, try delousing the closet in you own room.
- 8) Your school may have done away with winners and losers, but life **HAS NOT**. In some schools they have abolished failing grades and they'll give you as **MANY TIMES** as you want to get the right answer. This doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to **ANYTHING** in real life.
- 9) Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off and very few employers are interested in helping you **FIND YOURSELF**. Do that on your own time.
- 10) Television is **NOT** real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.
- 11) **Be nice to nerds**. Chances are you'll end up working for one.

WHY I CONSIDER YOU THE BEST!

The following is a letter we recently received about another "Baseliner." We try to share all of these with our employees. Too often, it is thought that we only report the negative things we come in contact with and that is not true. We cover the negative things, so there becomes an opportunity to improve. Jesse has done a good job and we want to thank him for his efforts. **Thanks for a job well done!**

J.W.:

I just wanted to let you know that Jesse Rios III did an outstanding job for me at Citgo. All I had to do was give him my weld map, identify which welds were already tested, and he took full control from there. This was not an easy job since all of the scanning was in the rack. We had 2 lines totaling approx. 2000 linear feet. As a matter of fact, he found a couple of welds that I missed!! I'm sure you probably know what kind of hand he is, but I felt he needed recognition for a job well done.

Jay Scott

DO YOU KNOW THIS GUY?

He is so busy telling the world how great he is and belittling others that he never recognizes the real potential in people. Instead of assisting others in becoming better, he is busy trying to put them down, so he will look better. You can find him idly pondering how great he is and how to exploit people to pay him more than what he is worth. These people exist all around you. Listen to their conversations and you will recognize them immediately. Their sentences start with "I". Little do they recognize that their true strengths are in helping and encouraging others to become all that they can be. It is in their capacity to make this a better world, but they're too busy trying to get the world to revolve around them. It normally takes a major tragedy in their lives to see the errors of their way. **Do you know this guy? Help him, he needs it!**



Thought, the Lost Ability!

It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it!- Aristotle

All action results from thought, so it is thoughts that matter!
-Sai Baba

The thought you have now shapes your experience of the next moment. Practice shaping the moment. -Tom Barrett

If everyone thought before they spoke, the silence would be deafening.-George Barzan

I think if you look at people, whether in business or government, who haven't had any moral compass, who've changed to say whatever they thought the popular thing was, in the end they're losers.-Michael Bloomberg

Think like a man of action, act like a man of thought.-Henri Louis Bergson

The man who can smile when things go wrong has thought of someone else he can blame it on.-Robert Bloch

Surprise yourself, exercise some original thought today!
-Anonymous

It's okay to use your brain for some deep entertaining thought. Surprise yourself and the World!-Anonymous

HONOR!

What Does Honor Mean To You?

You must have personal courage to do what is right. Never compromise your honor.-Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez

Doing the right thing, even when there is no benefit or personal gain.

There are few things more dishonorable than misleading the young.

Dignity does not consist of possessing honors, but in deserving them.

It is the character of few men to honor without envy a friend who has prospered.

Honor sinks where commerce long prevails.

Our own heart and not other men's opinion form our true honor.

HAPPY BE-LATED MOTHER'S DAY!

My mother has been dead for over thirty-five years and I still pay tribute to her memory. She was the single most important person in the development of my value system. She passed away three weeks after I came home from Vietnam. I was watching Fox News this morning and they asked people to contact them with the best advice they ever received from their mother. I have many, but listed below are a few of them:

- If you want something bad enough, when you get older, get a job and buy it for yourself.
- Always do the honorable thing, even if it brings you personal loss or pain.
- Regardless of religion or race, if each one of us was cut, we would all bleed red. We are all the same in the eyes of God!
- Always treat others fairly, like the way you would want to be treated.
- Always tell the truth, it is much less painful.

**Mother And All Of You Mothers Thanks
For The Good Advice!**

20 YEARS

PAYING TRIBUTE!

Being in business for over twenty (20) years has been a milestone. Our success has been measured many times and found to be outstanding. It would be nice to say that it is all because of the intelligence and wisdom that I have exercised over the years. Or that my business sense was great. I believe the reason that we are still in business with so many others failing is because of our people. We have made good choices. We have hired people with the desire to be better and help the company better itself. We have encouraged them to seek all the certifications that are available. We have re-invested the company's profits in making these people better. We have tried to keep up with the latest Technology. We have maintained a high standard of Ethics without compromising our moral upbringing. I believe all of these things have made the difference.

With that said, I would like to recognize the people that have helped make all of this possible. Listed below are their names and the approximate number of years with the company:

20 years plus-Mark Patterson, Barbara Ralls, J.W. Ralls Less than 20 Years, but more than 15 years- Gary Nichols, Carol Frazier, Less than 15 years, but more than 10 years-John Ralls II, Joe Villanueva, Willie Vickery, David Fricks, Johnny Grimes Sr., Misty Ralls, Fred Cimo, Russell Hogg, Jerry Seay, Johnny Grimes Jr., Lindsay Beardsley, Jose Gonzalez, Becky Gaydos, Austin Chambers, Jody Cantrell, Don Nava, Orlando Pina, Todd Edwards, Larry Yell, less than 10 years, but more than 5-Elva Loomis, Lee Marsh, Robert Quinones, Randall Saltink, Steve Hunt, Oscar Benavidez, Arnulfo Flores, Tracy Mills, Michael Humphrey, Terry Files, Howard Mauch, Orville Palmer, Jesse James, Jimmy Villanueva, Clay Ford, Jesse Torres Less than 5 years-Marcus Guerrero, Marcus Garcia, Gary Archer, Gregory Gerald, Trinity Thevenot, Roger Rojas, Ronald Rios, Jesse Rios, Jessica Pyles, Leticia Ramirez, Renee Upham, Christopher Beardsley, Billy Boudreaux, Michael White, Paul Westbrook, A. D. Boyd, Steven Fey, Darrell Riley, Justin Voelkel, Michael Roberts, Enrique Garcia, Christopher Chavez, Ruben Gonzales, Michael Rouquette, Jerry Henke, Abbey Pearson, Richard Gonzales, Patty Mikeman, Christopher Black, David Del Bosque, Ed Soto, Brant Shields, Kelly Edwards, Mark Langston, Johnny Davis, Juan Hernandez, Trish Simmons, Garrett Seay, Gail Adams, Moo Adkins, Joey Dominique, Gregory Cole, Joshua Lopez, Martin Courville, Greg Gleinig, Roy Bent, Leony Leyva, Brian Hines, Karl Smith, William Cordoba, Tim Martinez, Rachelle Hobbs, Richard Benoit, Henry Flores, Robert Martinez, Micah Spanutius, Shawn Seelye, Waco Ware, Clark Conrad, Billy Chandler, Horacio Garcia, Paul Yell and Chad Leur. When you count up the total number of years that these people have been with Base Line Data, Inc., it will total up to be over 550 years. Their total experience level in the inspection field far exceeds that and almost all have two to three National Certifications.

These people have demonstrated year after year, that they have what it takes to be a "Baseliner". They have served the company well. They have proven that they have loyalty, dedication and are in it for the "long haul". Without them, none of our accomplishments would have been possible. **Thanks for a job well done!**

ANOTHER CWI EXAMINATION COMPLETED!

Saturday, May 21st, 2005, about twenty-six people from multiple companies took their Certified Welding Inspector (CWI) examination. This examination consisted of 150 Fundamental questions, 46 Code questions and 46 Hands-on questions. The test is not considered easy. Whether these people pass and become CWI's or not, they should all be considered winners. Most have spent many hours preparing for this test. They have neglected other responsibilities, so they could be prepared. The total cost is very high, not counting the numerous hours of studying. The hard part is over, but the anxiety is just beginning. They will have to wait approximately 6-8 weeks for the results. I want to congratulate them all for making the effort. **They stand with the best of the best!**



Caught in the squeeze:

By: Michael Garland (General Mgr. of Amerispect)
Published in: Bic Alliance Magazine

Why the best Inspectors are leaving our industry

There are some disturbing trends simmering in the mechanical inspection industry, especially on the petrochemical and refining side. If changes do not occur soon, there could be some serious and costly consequences.

Certification costs are outpacing compensation

Mechanical inspectors feel that a certification program is a good thing and that the original intent of the program was valid. The certification/re-certification program was initially set up to ensure the inspectors working in the refining/petrochemical plants were qualified to perform the work. The API was the logical organization to implement the inspector certification program. But today many inspectors, especially those who don't work for an owner/user facility, think the program has gone amuck.

Lean and mean or feeding the revenue stream?

The API now has numerous certifications required of qualified inspectors. So many in fact, that they tend to overlap in some areas. Many argue that the API could simplify the certification process by administering a comprehensive combination test. For instance certification to API-510, API-570 and API-653 could be combined into a single test. This streamlining would cost the individual inspector less money and similarities in tests, especially when it comes to the welding portion; it could be eliminated. The API has been resistant to this concept. One must wonder why this is so when our industry is used to downsizing and rightsizing. In effect we've been streamlining for more than two decades.

Inspector pay rates have stagnated

Even though the costs to both inspection companies and individual inspectors has increased due to the certification requirements, inspector's wages have not increased proportionately, if at all. Here again, inspection companies are being squeezed. Owner/users have been resistant to rate increases even though insurance premiums continue to climb (especially since 9/11). Inspection companies have never enjoyed high profit margins and are now forced into leaner margins each year. With rates stagnating as business costs rise and profit margins fall, inspection companies cannot afford pay raises even though they desperately want to keep their best talent.

Why the seasoned professionals are frustrated

Many outstanding inspectors have already left the industry and others are ready to leave due to certification and re-certification requirements, and pay rate frustration. Because of this talent drain, there is a shortage of knowledgeable personnel. To fill the void, newly "certified" individuals are coming into the industry with little or no "visual inspection" experience- and they are getting paid the same as an inspector who has 15 or 20 years of experience- another frustration. Inspectors make about \$28 an hour on average, which is about \$7 to \$10 less than a good turnaround planner. Since the professional inspector knows equipment inside and out, why not become a planner, have less physical stress and get \$10 an hour more?

Dwindling inspection resources need to be addressed now

The API is made up mostly of owner/users throughout the petrochemical industry. They can help revitalize the inspection industry by streamlining certification. Owner/users know that top-of-the-line inspectors are integral to a quality project and that these people provide an essential service to risk reduction. They can encourage rate increases to preserve the talent pool. Inspection companies can encourage customers to identify and plan for inspection resources for their turnarounds sooner and commit to their inspection companies sooner to reduce the up and down last minute staffing problems.

The writing is on the wall. It is to everyone's advantage to tackle these issues now before we have no one to outsource our inspection services to. Believe me: It will be much cheaper to retain our best inspectors now than to slough off the consequences and wait until the problem is a crisis. Experience cannot be replaced overnight!!

Training:

CERTIFIED WELDING INSPECTION COURSE

The next course begins October 17, 2005. The course will be two days a week 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 December 17th, 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 six weeks before the exam.** All preparatory courses will be conducted in the evenings and start 8 to 10 weeks prior to the examination date.

Next CWI Tests Held at Base Line Data in 2005

<u>TEST DATE</u>	<u>APPLICATION DEADLINE</u>
December 17, 2005	November 5, 2005

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.

EXCAVATION COMPETENCY PERSON TRAINING

Base Line Data, Inc. will be scheduling another "Excavation Competency Person" Course in the near future. Please contact Juan Hernandez if you are interested in attending.

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.

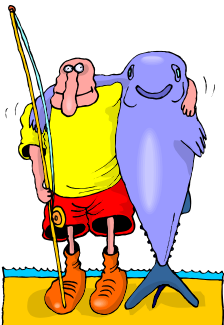
PROPOSED VISUAL TESTING (VT) COURSE PLANNED

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.

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.

3rd Annual Base Line Data, Inc. Shootout Fishing Tournament Food + Door Prizes



When: Saturday, June 25, 2005 **Weigh in:** 4:30 p.m.
Where: Base Line Data, Inc. Parking Lot; 206 Lang Rd.
Cost: \$40.00/team; Up to four contestants per boat will make up a team
RSVP: Chris Beardsley @ (361)774.7195 or cbeardsley@bldata.com

All Forms can be picked up at the Base Line Data, Inc. Portland Office. See Lindsay for applications, rules and regulations.

Kids are welcome. There will be plenty of activities for the youngsters!

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! Clay Ford, Arnold Flores, Jr., Joe Gonzalez, Randall Saltink, Allyson Gonzalez, Orlando Pina, Jesse Torres, Jr., Tracy Mills, & Billy Boudreaux

SETTING A STANDARD!

Recently, multiple jobs were performed using the Innov-X system. This system identifies the percentage of a certain element and in most cases identifies the material. Each technician that performed the work was qualified on the unit. After the work was performed, a report was completed with the elements recorded on the examination. These were submitted to the client as documentation. Three months later, we started getting reports back wanting changes. Who pays for these changes and why did this not get picked up after the first report submittal?

Base Line Data, Inc. performs positive material identification for many different clients. Each one of them wants something a little different in the reporting. You have to be psychic to know what they want in their report. They need to tell you how they want their reports formatted and if they don't provide you with a format, then you should ask.

Setting a standard in the beginning of a job could have eliminated this extra work. If a client doesn't know what he/she wants, then you as a technician should suggest several methods that could be used. You cannot assume that the client knows what he wants or that you know what he wants. **Ask and make sure!**

Setting the standard is part of our job. Identify when you first get on the job what the client needs as far as format is concerned. The client should be proactive too and let you know what his expectations are. It is unbelievable that a change is requested three months after a job has been completed.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER!

He best keeps from anger who remembers that God is always looking upon him!

Generally, one who rows the boat doesn't have time to rock it!

LOBO and NPRA SHOW!

We have just finished the Lobo Show in Corpus Christi that was held the week of May 16th. It was great seeing all of our customers and having a chance to thank them for the work they provide us. We displayed our new Ground Penetrating Radar and saw a lot of interest in it. The Omni-Scan Phased Array Ultrasonic Unit was another piece of equipment that many people were curious about.

We also completed the NPRA show in New Orleans, LA May 23rd, 2005. This show is moved around each year so clients can get an opportunity to participate in it. We displayed our new equipment and talked to many who need the services.

We want to thank all of our clients that stopped by our booths and visited. Although, we only displayed Ground Penetrating Radar, Omni-Scan Phased Array, Innov-X (PMI), Panametric 37DL+ and our MFE 2412 Mark II floor scanner, we have over fifty services we provide our customers. Call us if there is a service that you need!

A PERCEPTION OR THE TRUTH!

Recently, an article was sent to me written by a gentleman that had sold his company to a large inspection company. It was sent to me by a good friend that has owned and sold several inspection businesses over the years and currently owns another inspection company.

We, as many other inspection businesses, are in agreement with the general message presented. We see gasoline prices exploding, insurance premiums soaring and other cost going up, but we're left with trying to maintain a credible workforce with less compensation for our people. It's becoming more and more difficult to keep good people and not being able to increase our pricing for them. The raises deserved can't just come out of our shrinking profits. With electrical and automobile services running at \$65.00/hr, there needs to be an invoice change in the cost of experienced, certified inspectors.