Back to School

High schools to universities, magnets to private schools, O&G is busy building across Connecticut

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Communication technology today is, for the most part, amazing. I say this because it isn’t totally amazing.

During its evolution, technology has enabled, indeed forced us to abandon critical components of communication that are essential to run a successful construction company. Those of us who have been around long enough to remember the two-way radio era could lend some credence to what I am saying. To those who never experienced the power of such a device, let me enlighten you about this more personal period of O&G history.

Once upon a time, before personal computers, cell phones, emails and texts, we communicated through two-way radios. While I don’t want to denigrate these advancements, they sorely lack the impact of the radio. You see, this simple device, with the push of a button, was a microphone to every employee in the company. Unlike the voice-activated technologies of today, it blared activated voices. This is important for two reasons. A voice, when angry, amused, complimentary or instructive, is exponentially more expressive than a text or an email because it sets an unmistakable tone. And when such a voice is in a public forum, it lends gravity to the issue because everyone in the company is listening. This elevates the concept of accountability and responsibility, which leads to credibility.

Today’s technology is appropriate for personal communication. However, when we need to spread the gospel of productivity, safety, quality and ethics, the radio is the superior medium. Much of what I learned early on in my career can be traced back to the exchanges I listened to on the radio. Car 1, Car 4 and Car 9, otherwise known as Raymond, Francis and George, could be heard daily spewing out orders and suggestions on everything from safety to production to equipment maintenance – sometimes with humor, sometimes with tutorial instruction and sometimes with the fury of Genghis Khan. These public tongue lashing served as baptisms into a corporate culture that was demanding, to-the-point and bigger than the individual. They provided a sense of belonging no email could ever duplicate.

Sitting at South Main (Command Central), you could be an ear witness, in real time, to all the crucial issues besetting every job site of every division. At the end of each shift, questions streamed over the airwaves. “How many tons, how many cubic yards, how many linear feet?” If production was down you would ultimately be asked, “What happened?” – and God help you if you had no answer or the wrong answer. You felt the pulse of the company and knew with certainty where your attention should be focused. Political correctness was non-existent. Words and tones were chosen to send the message home. Outbursts like, “You tell ‘that guy’ the next time I see him doing anything that stupid it will be the last time!” served as strike one in a two-strike scenario in which every employee was at bat.

One classic exchange that sticks out in my mind involved Car 1 and an employee who had a company pickup truck. Noticing that the truck was dirty, Car 1 told him to wash his vehicle. His response: “I washed it yesterday.” Car 1’s response: “Did you wash your face this morning?” The message was clear – the truck was the face of the company and should look clean every day.

Sometimes when atmospheric conditions permitted, we could hear the dialogue or diatribe of other companies overlapping our frequency. These, too, reminded us of how the competition viewed the world and what we needed to do to compete. Yes, our corporate culture has been hijacked by technology, making it harder to communicate with those actually doing the work. The solution? Make it a point to spend time in the field, not the field office. Speak to the crews. Impart our expectations. Listen to their problems. You just might learn something that can benefit all of us.

Having said all this, I think it is fitting to close in the style of that “more direct” era. The story involves a golfer who teed up his ball and swung only to miss the target and wind up killing several hundred ants on an adjacent ant hill. Subsequent attempts flailing at the golf ball ended the same way, killing more and more ants. Finally one ant said to the rest of the colony, “If we want to survive we better get on the ball.”

Over and out.

David M. Oneglia
President
Unveiling the high school the Town of Guilford has been waiting for...

Its interior spaces are subdued and striking, their palette of calm colors and “Guilford Apple Green” bathed with soft, natural light from glazing that seems to be everywhere. There is a peaceful sort of energy flowing at the brand new Guilford High School. It’s a building that principal Rick Misenti unabashedly pronounces to be spectacular.
Building the new high school is the first major school construction project in the seaside town of Guilford, Connecticut, population 22,000, in decades. A lengthy service life was wrung out of the old high school with strategic additions and clever patches. But in the town’s mind, the time had come when no more patches would do. The time of waiting for a brand new school was over.

A three-year, $92M project to erect a 225,000SF building and develop acres of roads, parking areas and playing fields, it is far and away the largest building project ever undertaken by the town. The first of its two phases began in July of 2013 with the removal of a baseball field and the building of temporary access roads, contractor staging areas and the new school. The second phase, underway since June, has seen abatement at the old school and its sequenced demolition; that will be followed by the construction of a bus loop and student parking area this fall followed by two new playing fields in the spring. All work will wrap up in May of 2016, unless the town moves forward with a proposed change to upgrade a playing field to synthetic turf which would extend the work by several weeks.

At the helm of O&G Industries’ construction management team overseeing the project are Project Manager Dan Hetzler and Project Engineer Tim Chan. Hetzler returned to Connecticut after ten high-pressure years building commercial space in Silicon Valley. This is his eleventh year with O&G and the fifth school he’s worked on. Chan is a civil engineer who had interned with O&G, did civil site design for two years after college and rejoined the company when a position opened in 2012.

Sitting back in the job trailer a stone’s throw from the new school on a late afternoon in August, as clusters of incoming freshmen were being toured through the new halls and just ten days ahead of the first day of classes, Hetzler and Chan look back at the building of the school.

Chan speaks about his interactions with school personnel. “They’ve been primarily with the deans, Principal Misenti, the IT staff and the secretaries. Everyone has been easy to work with. Their questions are mostly about dealing with all the new features here. I don’t think many of them have been given a brand new building before and they’re not quite sure what to do with it.” Chan and Hetzler both play the unofficial dual role not just of project builders but project concierges of sorts, amiably fielding the questions and requests of staff and visitors.

“I’m especially pleased with the detail that was put into everything,” Hetzler comments. “When you stand in the student center and look down the midline of that space, the wood ceiling aligns with the reveals of the acoustical panels which line up with the reveals of the sheet rock which line up with the windows. That’s a testament to the team on site and to the general superintendent watching that controls are maintained.”

O&G partnered with Fusco Corporation of New Haven who assumed the general superintendent role. Fusco’s Jeff Schull, says Hetzler, was instrumental from groundbreaking through occupancy. He was later joined by Alison Tarsi to supervise punchlists and the turnover of the building.

“The town’s been very happy with the milestones being met,” adds Hetzler. Guilford’s Superintendent of Schools is Dr. Paul Freeman. He’s participated in multiple school development projects in his 20-plus years in education and has worked with O&G before. He has been involved with the new Guilford High School since its first day in Guilford five years ago. “From our perspective we didn’t know the difference between Fusco and O&G. The cooperation and partnership has been seamless. I realize this has been a demanding job. It seemed like the building team had to serve multiple masters including the community at large who took a significant interest in it and expected to be active participants. O&G has done a masterful job balancing all the voices and concerns. They’ve has been extremely responsive to the town.”

In the project’s opening months the Building Committee found itself with a significant windfall. After the project buyout, the process Hetzler and company exercised to review all bids and select the lowest responsible bidders, there was a cost savings for the town of $5M. The question then became where to
top to bottom

View of the southerly entrance to the school; the school’s main gymnasium; 600-seat theater featuring engineered acoustics, a stagefront riser and professional quality sound and lighting; cafeteria under a two-story atrium; view down second floor center hallway. Elsewhere in the building are a “hologlass display” to project school news, an eight-foot-diameter school seal engraved in native granite at the main entrance, vertical copper panels cladding certain exterior walls, a two-story, glass-and-steel canopy at the main entrance and removable wood plank ceilings scattered throughout the halls.
best invest – reallocate, really – the newfound money. Nearly 20 candidate items were proposed, each with its advocates but not enough money to complete them all.

If there has been one sticky spot for Hetzler, it is this: the Committee requested the most time it could have to debate and choose the add-ons and still keep to schedule, and Hetzler and team have obliged. With one eye on production and the other on the calendar, Hetzler and Chan have chafed at the bit to keep moving ahead.

Of all the school’s features designed by Tai Soo Kim Partners of Hartford and architect Jesse Saylor, perhaps the most striking is the theater, a 600-seat venue for students and community. The construction of its engineered acoustic details required close coordination with the designer who would regularly visit the site. With rows of catwalks, precisely angled acoustical baffling along the walls and “clouds” suspended high above the floor to hold and hide lighting and sprinklers systems and provide additional acoustic baffling, Hetzler chose to exploit BIM 3D modeling. Normally reserved for MEP trades, BIM added clarity by visualizing the theater and other spaces in three dimensions to aid the architectural trades building it.

One of the first challenges confronting construction was the physical closeness of the functioning, 1960s-era school to the new site, just 20 feet away at its tightest juncture. It allowed site access on three sides, not four, with limited laydown area for materials. “That’s where the power of a good general superintendent comes into play,” says Hetzler, “because he can keep activities moving without losing somewhere else. Fusco’s involvement has helped everybody.”

To meet the compressed schedule, the site has been open and active every weekend for two years. Without exception the team was on site, managing. For the small O&G/Fusco management team, personal time gave way to the responsibility of ensuring that work in place was completed and no precious time was lost.

Misenti has been a principal for 26 years and, he jokes, is “remarkably still alive.” He is thrilled. He refers to his new school as a “spectacular creation,” giving high praises both to the architects who designed the space, with its interplay of patterns and abundance of light and views, and to the team that translated that vision into functioning space. “Both Dan and Tim have wonderful personalities that have nurtured the project. They have taken us step by step through the construction. They think ahead for us, they answer all our questions and they always get back to us in a timely manner. They’re just a wonderful part of the team.”

The Chair of the Building Committee is Guilford resident Scott Pinckney, himself a senior construction manager at STV in Hartford with 20 years of experience running construction projects. He’s been involved with the project for five years, nine years when you include the time given to various siting and feasibility studies. “O&G has a reputation for integrity and for being a stand-up company and they maintained that reputation here,” he says, thoughtfully. “I’m ‘old school’ and I appreciate doing business on a handshake, and that’s the feeling I had working with O&G. That’s a rare find today.”

Until the last details are checked off next May, Hetzler says his project will remain in crunch mode. “There’s no float in the schedule. We’re marching through the milestones, working with a high level of finishes, building for discerning people who know the industry, and with high expectations from the town.” And that’s nothing new to the crew finishing up at Guilford High School.
Back to School

Since 1963 O&G’s Building Division has compiled an impressive academic record, completing 235 school projects in Connecticut. Active projects this fall include the sampling below.

1. Yale University Sterling Power Plant
   - Removal and replacement of concrete roof deck, steel and MEPs without interrupting power to Yale and Yale-New Haven Hospital

2. Naugatuck High School
   - 325,000SF, 30-month, four-phase renovate-as-new-while-occupied project, meeting High Performance Building Standards

3. Wethersfield High School
   - $75M project including 24,000SF additions and renovate-as-new the existing 250,000SF school while fully occupied

4. Bowen Field at Hillhouse High
   - Hi-profile demolition and rebuilding of new track-and-field facilities, football/soccer field, bleachers and locker rooms

5. Miss Porter's Admission Center
   - Demolition and renovation of an historic, circa 1670 grist mill, with completely new mechanicals and the addition of a riverside plaza

6. Putnam High School
   - 32-month, $37M project to renovate as new while occupied a 94,000SF school with additions totalling 9,600SF

7. Orville H. Platt High School
   - Four-phase, $94M renovate-as-new-while-occupied project includes new freshman academy, vo-tech, kitchen/cafe wings

8. Washington Montessori Fields
   - Design-build contract to construct a soccer field and tennis courts, including extensive site work

9. UConn Central Utilities Plant
   - Latest project expands the Central Utility Plant’s capacity by adding 2100 tons of cooling power to meet peak demands

10. CREC Aerospace and Engineering
    - 184,000SF academy designed with aerospace architectural elements and employing sophisticated mechanical systems

11. Guilford High School
    - Entirely new school features a theater, hologlass message board, copper and wood panel elements and extensive glazing

12. Rocky Hill High School
    - Renovate-as-new-while-occupied, $38M, 36-month project includes additions and renovations totaling 62,000SF
The just-opened CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering magnet school is a fittingly impressive home for the school that U.S. News and World Report ranked as the highest performer in Connecticut and the 15th top performer in all the country in its 2014 “Best High Schools” edition. Since its inception in 2010 the academy had split its students between two spaces in Hartford; now, after its September 2 opening, some 750 middle- and high-school-age students share the same Windsor facility.

CREC is the Capital Region Education Council. It acts like a board of education when it comes to projects like the Academy, but it is its building arm, CREC Construction, to which O&G Project Manager George Graikoski and team report. The focus at the Academy is on advanced mathematics, science and engineering with an emphasis on aerospace. Its dedicated student body is drawn primarily from Hartford as well as 35 surrounding towns. (One student, an eighth grader who plans on becoming an astronaut, commutes nearly three hours from Branford every school day.)

The new school is built on the site of a former United Technologies complex. Three of the UTC buildings were demolished, leaving only their elevated slabs and structural steel elements to be repurposed in the new design; a fourth was folded into the new structure. Along with the purchase came a neglected koi pond which has been treated as wetland and restored. It makes an organic foil to the high-tech academy that has risen around it.

George Graikoski has been managing the project since it began in 2013. He’ll be here until late October when he estimates the punchlist of finishing touches will be completed. He’s joined in the project’s final days by Superintendent Brian Pudelka and second-shift Superintendent George Givens, though others in the two-and-a-half-year project have come and moved on to other O&G jobs. Graikoski began with O&G 26 years ago as a Project Engineer and in 1993 began managing school construction projects. This Academy is his twelfth. At 184,000SF it is also one of the larger jobs he’s overseen, and in some regards has been one of the most technically challenging.

Graikoski points up to “the wing,” a dramatic 140-foot-long element projecting from the school’s north side that evokes the image of an airplane wing. It houses middle school science labs. “There wasn’t anything easy about building that,” he says with a smile, shaking his head. Not simply a barrel shape, it also has a taper so that as the radius shortens its curvature changes. “It looks phenomenal but you don’t realize how much work went into it. The tubular steel skeleton with its sections every ten to twelve feet each had a different radius. Then we had to engineer and install rectangular pieces of decking as the skin.” Graikoski coordinated multiple planning and progress meetings between project architect Friar Associates, the decking installer and the president of the German manufacturer of the zinc panels that would form the skin in order to arrive at a solution to which everyone could agree. In the end, he says, “it came out beautifully.”
Bryce Sens is Friar Associate’s Senior Project Manager. He oversaw as many as 15 members of an architectural team that designed and reviewed the project. “It was challenging to design,” he says, referring to the unique architectural elements and the array of mechanical systems employed. “All in all this has been a really rewarding experience. Working with George was easy. He was understanding and very good at enforcing the contract documents.”

The mechanical systems that heat and cool the building incorporate every type of system Graikoski has worked with, and one more. It was the first time he installed chilled beams. Chilled beams are hollow rectangular beams that house copper tubing to circulate chilled water in warm months and heated water in the winter. Chilled beams in the classrooms radiate cooling and heating, dispersed by low-flow air from air handling units on the roof. There are no moving parts in the classroom. The result is efficient heating and cooling that is very quiet and very clean. To operate optimally, chilled beams require a sealed environment with close control of relative humidity to prevent weeping.

There are five major air conditioning systems here. “This place has everything. It’s very complicated compared to a typical school. Most people don’t realize it. You walk into the building and you’re cool and it’s quiet and you don’t even think about it,” says Graikoski.

Much of the academy’s exterior is clad in a rain curtain. A European convention, four-by-four-foot phenolic (plastic) panels – dark charcoal, grey and white – are mounted off the gypsum and masonry wall. They allow any driven moisture to pass behind and weep down and out at the foot. It prevents moisture from being trapped behind the exterior and allowing mold to develop.

Along with its technical challenges the project has presented a new management twist. One of the client’s intentions, called CREC Equity, admirably looks to split trade packages into smaller units, enabling more small and disadvantaged businesses to participate than would normally be seen on a similar project. In this case there were 46 different subcontractors. It meant more contract and management work for Graikoski. “But it went well, very well actually. These small business enterprises performed very well.”

Other features put the Academy’s engineering and aerospace mission on display. An actual size Apollo space capsule reproduction will be suspended high in the main entry atrium. A colorful pixelated lunar nebula decoration based on a Hubble Space Telescope photograph wraps one corner of the building. Passive solar panels over the parking area, solar “trees” that dot the campus, and wall-mounted motorized solar louvers that tilt at the command of a small “weather station” atop the cafeteria are expected to provide 30% of the power the school needs to operate. The long walkway to the main entry mimics a runway at nearby Bradley International Airport with runway lights in the cobbles that come on at dusk (the school is located just about two miles from the airport and jets routinely pass nearby). Another entryway cleverly uses masonry to mimic a runway where planes touch down and leave behind streaks of black rubber. The school’s entry sign evokes the tale of a jet. Signs of the school’s high-flying mission are everywhere, and students here will soar to even higher heights at their state-of-the-art campus.
For the focused college students who interned this summer across the company’s divisions and received a valuable taste of real-world work in the construction industry, it was a time of revelation, a “gut check” to see if they have the desire and will to make construction their career. It’s revealing, too, for the company as it evaluates prospective hires in action. “The interns are surprised at how much responsibility we give them,” says Aaron Mednick, Building Division Vice President who hires and exit-interviews interns.

Here’s a representative group, many of whom have a family member employed at O&G.

**Joel Abbott**
Senior I Civil Eng. I UConn

“I saw that I really enjoy being able to go into the field and solve problems. It gave me a perspective on how jobs go together which I would never learn in a classroom.”

**Brendan Behm**
Senior I Const. Mgmt. I CCSU

“My biggest challenge was multitasking, working on several projects at once. Organization and time management are key components of success.”

**Anthony Diaz**
Freshman I Arch. Eng. I NEIT

“I had the opportunity to see an actual commercial job site. I tried out things I wasn’t used to and that’s what the internship is all about and helps you grow.”

**Devin Dziedzic**
Junior I Crim. Justice I NWCC

“I learned on the fly and figured out how to operate computers and other devices I’ve had no experience with, which led me to build my own computer.”

**Chris Gallagher**
Sophomore I Mech. Eng. I UNH

“I saw all the moving parts in a production environment. The best part was working with the plant manager and seeing that I could work in a fast-paced setting.”

**Ray Harding**
Junior I Safety/Occ. H. I Keene State

“After the internship I know I’d like to pursue a safety career in construction where I can make a positive impact for the company and the people working there.”

**Kenzie Humes**
Freshman I Nursing I Quinnipiac U

“The best part was the people in Accounts Receivable. They treated me with respect and patience. I would not trade the experience for the world.”

**Marc Mancini**
Senior I Civil Eng. I UHartford

“I worked with highly experienced individuals who introduced me to the beginnings of what I’ll need to start in the civil engineering field.”

**Christina Moavero**
Senior I Elem. Ed. I UConn

“O&G is a tightly knit company. I have a lot of family here. It was a pleasure getting to know everyone at Beacon Falls and facilities across the state.”

**Matt Rogalski**
Sophomore I Business I UConn

“I was in the showroom and at the counter and actually sold some items. I saw I need to be very outgoing in the professional world and communicate in effective ways.”

**Steve Torres III**
Senior I Civil Eng. I UConn

“These internships have been great for my career path. I saw the road aspect of civil engineering and how the division works the last two summers. Thanks to all who helped.”

**Jeff Violette**
Senior I CM/Bus. Mgmt. I Roger Williams

“I gained valuable field experience working with extremely knowledgeable, experienced PMs and superintendents. They slowed down to explain what they were doing.”

**Interns Summer of 2015**
The three-year additions and renovations project at Wethersfield High is well underway, standing at 65% completion, with work now turning to phase two and three tasks. Among the school's numerous upgrades and new features will be an electronic music room and recording studio, a greenhouse and green roof, a photovoltaic solar panel system, technology in every classroom, and significant energy conservation measures. O&G is the Construction Manager; the Project Architect is Quisenberry Arcari of Farmington, Connecticut.
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O&G Named One of America’s Top 100 Green Building Contractors

*Engineering News-Record* has named O&G Industries to the rolls of the “greenest” contractors in America. The market for sustainable construction is a growing one, and O&G is finding its role growing, with increasing call for collaboration at the outset of projects and more commissioning, testing and systems monitoring after the construction cycle is complete. O&G is one of only two Connecticut contractors to make the list.

“Ripping the Runway”

On October 10 the brand new theater at Naugatuck High was dedicated with a special “Rip the Runway” event. Principal Jan Samm presented O&G’s Mike Brennan, Vice President Building Division (left), and Project Manager Joe Vetro with a plaque thanking the company for sponsoring the event and recognizing “the site crew for its dedication and commitment to making tonight possible.”

O&G and SYEP Team Up to Mentor

As a participant in Norwich’s Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) for the past three years, 18-year-old Anthony Diaz had tried his hand at a number of summer gigs in construction. This one, as a paid intern at the Putnam High School Renovation project where O&G is Construction Manager, “was the most beneficial,” says Diaz, who graduated from Norwich Technical High School this June. He began his studies in architectural engineering at New England Institute of Technology in September (see “Interns,” page 11).

O&G Project Engineer Gina Palano was Diaz’s mentor, providing the right blend of direction and freedom to make the most of his experience. “I wouldn’t just tell Anthony the answer to a question, we’d look through drawings and figure it out.” Palano watched him become more independent and competent, and arranged to have him sit in on trade and owner meetings to observe the “soft” skills needed to succeed on a project.

This is the first collaboration between O&G and SYEP, part of a broader collaboration with funding partners the State of Connecticut and the Eastern Connecticut Investment Board.

Patricia Dixe (right, center) manages the SYEP Program. She speaks with obvious satisfaction about what Diaz has gleaned from being mentored. “We worked to place Anthony in something appropriate to what he was trying to do with his future. So this has been an awesome, awesome opportunity. It has given him a lot of new skills. He’ll be leaps ahead of his peers in college because of his training here.”

**ETHICAL BUSINESS PRACTICES ARE A CORNERSTONE OF OUR CULTURE AT O&G.**

Our ETHICS HOTLINE provides a way for you to provide DIRECT, CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS related to this essential cornerstone.
Superior quality in the services and products O&G delivers is a corporate-wide focus. In the Masonry Division, particularly when it comes to acquiring stone product, it is essential: "Quality is the most important factor we consider when purchasing our natural stone product," Jack Harding will tell you. Among his many duties at the Beacon Falls Fabrication and Distribution Center (see “My Days at O&G,” page 20) is sourcing stone products from around the world that meet client needs. Greater than price or delivery, it is the quality of the product and installation that matters. Quality endures.

Quality takes time to establish. New stone suppliers are judiciously screened and working relationships cultivated with care. Vendors with established reputations and proven records are given preference, especially when dealing with overseas suppliers. When product arrives at “Beacon,” it comes prepackaged in foam inside wooden crates for protection and shipping – it’s impractical for Harding’s staff to open and inspect every crate. There has to be a repeatable record of quality product delivered for the relationship to continue.

O&G chooses to buy from companies with their own quality control in place right in the quarries, right in the factories, where they physically inspect the stone work at three critical intervals:

- **Before fabrication begins**, where the raw stone’s grade, consistency of color and range of pattern are checked and verified free from defects and impurities;
- **During fabrication** where dimension stone is checked for accurate cuts and thicknesses; and
- **After fabrication** to be sure all pieces of stone are uniformly finished and, where it applies, that it is consistent with previously purchased stock so that compatibility issues do not arise.

Stone has to be structurally suitable for its intended use. The quality grading of stones makes that clear. Certain stones would be perfect for elegant patios and walkways, but would fail if used for a driveway. Other stones would be just right for dramatic vertical applications — facades and interior walls, for instance — but not for flatwork such as pavers, treads or copings where they would be a slip hazard or highly susceptible to damage from salt.

Additionally the stone has to be appropriate for the climate. Here in the Northeast, exterior stone needs to hold up to the freeze/thaw cycling that occurs year after year during the winter months. For many applications, mainly non-residential where dimension stone is used in cladding buildings, that stone must also qualify by meeting the standards set by building documents, industry guidelines and the American Society for Materials and Testing (ASTM).

Another important consideration in choosing quality products is their source. U.S. sources are given preference. When projects are incentivized to "go green" and target LEED certification, it is often required to source building materials locally. That’s where the Division’s stable of vetted domestic vendors of superior natural stone products fits the bill.

When imported stone is chosen it’s because it offers characteristics that are unattainable from domestic sources. There are skeptics who question its quality, says Harding, particularly when it comes to buying from China or India. “I always remind them,” he says, “that it’s the geological make-up of the stone rather than the geographical location of the supplier that makes the difference in materials. If you purchase from people with whom you’ve established trust and have built a relationship you’re never going to have to be concerned with quality.”

It has been said that quality is the best business plan. The Masonry Division is operating according to that plan.
A CULTURE OF SAFETY

The National Safety Council defines a “near miss” as an unplanned event that did not result in an injury, illness or damage, but could have. Here’s the problem: near-miss incidents are too easy to dismiss with a “no harm, no foul” attitude. They are “just close calls.” But ignoring and not reporting these close calls is an invitation for a disaster to happen the next time.

ConstructionEquipment.com has been studying near misses, looking at why they go unreported when reporting a “non incident” would actually lay groundwork to prevent the real deal in the future.

Here are eight common reasons they found for near misses going unreported:

1. Complacency. It is tempting to become comfortable with the way things are and be willing to put up with minor inconveniences when it is seems easier than fixing the situation. Even when one knows the chance for damage or injury is greater due to the current set-up or procedure, two fallacies can override reason: “it won’t happen to me” and “it’s not my problem.”

2. Concerns about a bad reaction. Workers expect they might be blamed or disciplined for a near miss incident, or perhaps they have seen a co-worker treated badly after getting injured on the job.

3. Complicated. If the process of filing a report is overly involved or confusing or too time-consuming, workers will hesitate to submit a report.

4. Peer pressure. Coworkers can see reporting a near miss as the action of a hero or a zero. If the person reporting the near miss is seen as trying to get on management’s good side, he may be less likely to report a near miss, especially if it happens to one of his coworkers.

5. Reputation and embarrassment. Workers can feel that reporting near misses makes them appear to be accident prone, especially if their co-workers are not reporting theirs. Sometimes there is a “macho” environment where battle scars are badges of honor and where workers don’t want to come across as weak.

6. Interruption. Everyone has deadlines and quotas. Reporting a near miss means, at the least, stopping to fill out a report and possibly several hours of additional down time.

7. Red tape and bureaucracy. Many of us have a natural aversion to filling out paperwork. If workers think that filing a near-miss report is going to turn into hours of meetings and additional paperwork, they may not chose to file a report in the first place.

8. Lack of feedback. When a worker files a near-miss report and does not get any feedback as to how the situation was rectified, or is not acknowledged in a positive way for filing the report, it is a disincentive to ever file a near-miss report again.

It all comes down to prevention

Near misses are just one degree short of an actual incident. When reported and assessed to get at root causes, it enables those causes to be resolved.

Near-miss reporting should be as simple, straightforward and effective as it can be. Reporting a near miss is very important to preventing actual serious, fatal and catastrophic incidents in the future. An incident prevented because precautions were taken at the near-miss stage could save the livelihood or even the life of oneself or a valued coworker.

So, where do you stand with near misses?
Congratulations to Our Quarry Teams!

Three O&G quarries were recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor Mine Safety and Health Administration for their records of employee hours worked without a lost workday injury in 2014. That totals **19,621 hours between the Woodbury, Southbury and New Milford quarries.**

**Safe Work Recognized**

In April O&G’s Safety Department recognized the project team at CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering as having the safest jobsite performance in the Building Division in 2014. Project Manager George Graikoski and team, including all contractors and subcontractors, had the lowest percentage of safety incidents of the Division’s active job sites. Graikoski believes in creating a safety mindset and a “level, organized environment” where workers are not prone to errors in judgment. He’s pleased with the daily Job Hazard Safety Analysis forms that laborers, tradesmen, foremen and superintendents all sign before beginning their work days. “We’ve had really good participation here,” he says. This is Graikoski’s fourth such award.

**Safety Celebrated at Bowen Field**

In recognition of an exemplary safety record at the Bowen Field project at Hillhouse High, O&G Project Manager Toya Rivers organized a “Safety Appreciation Cookout” for a recent Friday lunch break. Safety Manager Caswell Sewell addressed the 25 or so workers present, complimenting them on their commitment to O&G’s culture of safety.

**LAUNCHING A DEDICATED 24-7 SAFETY HOTLINE**

Safety Hotline
(860) 496-4866

**JOBSITE SAFETY IS A CORNERSTONE OF O&G CULTURE.**

Our Safety Hotline provides a means by which you can contact our Safety Team 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and receive an immediate response. Any issue in need of reporting is welcomed.
Ray Oneglia confers with the Army Corps of Engineers; two views of progress at the Thomaston Dam, 1959

Sixty years ago this August a convergence of two vicious hurricanes tore the Naugatuck River Valley apart. And it was a convergence of drive and risk-taking in the face of overwhelming community need that enabled a modest family construction business to become an integral part of the restoration and transform itself in the process.

With mute black-and-white photographs we revisit the destruction, the bridges rebuilt and the large dams created, and with a few words we recall that the flood’s aftermath was a kind of fuel to empower O&G’s growth. But what drove the small company was working in a town that had been demolished in a matter of hours and living in the middle of a community that needed vital services back on line. Time was of the essence: 47 lives had been washed away in the state, but many more were at risk in the aftermath.

Two days after the flood waters receded the Army Corps of Engineers, the Salvation Army and the Red Cross all set up camp in Torrington. Heavy equipment was brought in from all directions. The community mobilized. The recovery process clearly would be long. “It took a good portion of the next year before things were half-way normal,” recalls Sonny Savanella.

Savanella has been retired from O&G since 1996. But in November of 1955, the twenty-four year old was a new full-time hire and thrown into flood recovery work. “The bridges were all out and we were running all around the state to pick up Bailey bridges that were war surplus. Before the flood things were slow for everyone in construction. Unfortunately, I’d say, there was suddenly lots of work everywhere,” he says. Close to the Naugatuck many roads were made impassable by erupted pavement and heaped-up debris that had once been homes. Houses and businesses had washed away. Ground floors and higher were drenched and now moldering. Foundations were cracked, streets were furrowed open. There was no sanitary sewer. No power. No telephone service. Gasoline was hard to come by. Milk tankers were requisitioned to haul in water.

“We went and got a big, I mean humongous, generator from Brooklyn so we could run the Redi-Mix plant,” McKeon recalls. “We hooked a lawn mower with a belt to the gas pump so we could draw gas and carry it in buckets to the generator to keep it running. We had one guy, that’s all he did, back and forth to keep it running. We worked as many hours as we could stand. Everybody cooperated. We just wanted things back to normal.”

Ray and Francis recruited and hired and seemed to have a sixth sense about it, especially when it came to choosing bosses. They hired local young men and ninety percent of them, says McKeon, wound up being very successful managers in the company as it grew.

In 1958 O&G was awarded its biggest job to date, a $4M contract to build a dam in Thomaston that would prevent another such tragedy. It would be 2,000 feet long and 142 feet high. Three other dams and two levees would be ordered in the years that followed. But the Thomaston Dam was nearly a miss for O&G. Savanella remembers: “O&G had the lowest bid for the dam but the Corps was not going to give it to them. They said, ‘You never built a dam before.’ They were getting pressure from the big companies I believe. So the boys [young Francis, Raymond and George Oneglia] drove up to the Corp’s headquarters and said, ‘If you don’t let us build it we’ll never know how.’ It worked.” Savanella continues: “The boys I give a lot of credit. They were working 75 to 80 hours a week like we all were. We all felt we had to. The money was nice but you just needed to get life back to normalcy.”

Out of disaster, with many hands in a common purpose, resurrecting the drive recently exerted in the great war, a community was patiently pieced back together, stronger than it was before, and the foundations of a regional construction powerhouse were laid.
34 Years Running

On August 9 under sunny skies 204 runners took off on the Torrington Road Race. For 44 years the five-mile race has wound its way through the streets of the city, and for 34 of those years, Dean Dziedzic, Proposal Manager in the Building Division, has been its director. “We have a great team behind the race,” he says. “Everyone on the committee knows his part and I just oversee. They’re tremendous people and it all comes together.” Fellow O&G employees Leo Martigneni and Lorel Purcell are key members of Dziedzic’s team. His son Devin, who has helped with the race since he was five, is interning with O&G’s IT Department (see page 11).

The First in America

On September 26 The American Museum of Tort Law opened its doors in Winsted. It is the only law museum in America and was founded by Ralph Nader, a Winsted native who since the 1960s has led high-profile national efforts to legislate rights and remedies for citizens looking to resolve grievances. “People have asked me why I didn’t put the museum in New York City or in Washington,” said Nader at the museum’s convocation. “Why Winsted? I say why not Winsted? The Naugatuck River Valley was a birthplace of industry in New England and it was where people lost their lives in the industries they worked for.” Construction of the tort museum (torts are civil, versus criminal, wrongs that unfairly cause someone to suffer loss or harm) was a design-build project performed by O&G’s Special Projects Group. Under the seven-month contract crews demolished and renovated the interior of a 6,500SF former bank building in preparation for the installation of exhibits.

Operating Room in Operation

The demolition and reconstruction of Operating Room 1 at Torrington’s Charlotte Hungerford Hospital was completed in July, meeting its budget and two-and-a-half-month schedule. Because the construction space is surrounded by four functioning ORs, maintaining infectious control policies was critical. The hospital praised the crew’s quiet work and overall cleanliness. The upgrade is the latest in a series of successful infrastructure improvement contracts with the Hospital. No issues were found at a review by the Department of Public Health on September 23rd, and the room opened the next day.

Enviro-Friendly GreenPatch®

The Asphalt Division has added GreenPatch to its offerings as a direct replacement for traditional cold asphalt patch but without petroleum-based solvents or cutbacks. This formulation makes GreenPatch a VOC-compliant material in all fifty states. It can be installed even in holes containing water and makes a permanent, high-performance repair. Bulk product is available, with bagged product sold at O&G’s Mason Supply stores.
“Beacon” is a hub. Orders for custom stonework come in one door, expertly worked stone products ship out through another. Stone from vendors arrives and gets distributed to contractors, homeowners and the company’s seven masonry showrooms. At the center of the hub are two men, John Baranoski and Jack Harding. What they do keeps the gears turning at the big and busy Beacon Falls Fabrication and Distribution Center.

Baranoski’s focus is on estimating, a specialized skill honed over thousands of projects and 20 years in masonry construction. It tethers him to his office for much of the week, but every day he’s also out in the 95,000SF Beacon Falls facility overseeing the men and machines turning out custom stonework.

Summer is always crunch time. It’s when every mason demands his stone. There can be 50 jobs in the works at once. It’s particularly “crunchy” working for those masons who serve universities like nearby Yale, for whom O&G has crafted restoration stonework over the past three summers. Masons often are not allowed to begin until the summer break and must have their scaffolding down before classes resume. “They send us some very detailed work, mostly for restorations – complicated profiles and returns, sometimes ornaments for the tops of pinnacles that we do by hand to match existing.” Complicated or simple, no matter: Beacon must feed finished stone to masons rushing to complete their project in the tight summertime window.

This summer was particularly busy at Beacon. Six-day workweeks were normal. Story-tall CNC machines with their water-cooled drills and cutters diced giant stone slabs one after another, while operators at more compact machines or with hand tools cut and finished smaller stone pieces. There was also as much estimating going on as there was fabrication.

Baranoski has earned the trust with many of his mason clients, enabling him to deal directly with them. “Masons have told project managers, ‘We’ll just work directly with Beacon,’ which they and we like,” he says. Masons know the sequence in which they need their pieces so the first pieces needed are the first produced. “We can ship as pieces are ready to keep feeding the job and stay ahead of the masons, so we’re not working blindly to finish and ship everything at once.”

Lead times and schedules are the biggest challenges at Beacon. “People aren’t aware of all the steps required to produce the finish product,” says Baranoski. His goal, not easily accomplished, is to have job tickets (the client-approved directions that give his stoneworkers the green light and the details on how to produce the pieces) released months in advance of the customer’s need. In some cases such planning lets Baranoski and team work through the slower winter months and stockpile finished materials for shipment when spring arrives. Recent work this summer on Phase 1 of a planned four-phase brownstone renovation project at the Rhode Island School of Design followed that model. Because work was approved seasons ahead, the custom brownstone architectural elements were largely complete and ready when work began last May.

Now that fall has arrived Baranoski is busy setting the stage for a project that will start in March in which Beacon will be providing 50,000SF of precisely cut tiles of Bottecino and Turkish marbles and travertine for the much-anticipated Long Island Rail Road extension to Grand Central Station. He’s expecting to keep Beacon months ahead of the masons. He’s also in the midst of estimating a follow-on phase that is just about as big.

Jack Harding, tall and cordial, has been in the masonry industry all his working years, the last 22 of those with O&G. He directs purchasing, warehousing, wholesaling and distribution of natural stone products. His office is packed with sample boards, mementos and the paraphernalia of his trade, but he’s not there often. Instead he’s out among the crates and pallets in the yard or in the cavernous stone warehouse.

In Harding’s purchasing and importing domain, timing is key. “Whether it’s a special or stock order, between the time an invoice is approved and a purchase order placed it can easily take up to 12 weeks before we see the material in our yard,” he says. So he’s strategic about ordering and efficient with inventorying. With over 500 SKUs under his direction it requires that he monitor sales, rely on input from the Division’s sales team, read market trends and be a bit of a prognosticator to never run out of what he calls his “staples.”

Add to Harding’s purchasing, wholesaling and distribution duties the time-consuming responsibility of quoting overseas special orders – from Chinese, Indian, Italian, Israeli, English and other sources. He also searches out potential new products. Case in point: when Harding went to the Xiamen International Stone Fair in China last March with Masonry Division Vice President Bob Rizzo, they brought back samples of a striking charcoal-gray stone veneer. It was added to the O&G lineup and is just now arriving at Beacon, six months later. Harding predicts it will be a best seller.

Harding gives much credit to Administrator Cheryl Bouvier and his guys out in the yard: “We received more than 200 containers this year plus all the shipments and deliveries that went out of this facility over the summer – it only worked because it was a group effort.”

And it is, both men will tell you, the group effort of everyone at Beacon that keeps the gears turning.
For ten years DON DROST was the foreman of O&G’s equipment painting facility at South Main. He mastered the uncommon ability to produce superior finished work at the relentless pace the company required, never sacrificing craftsmanship. He saw to it that O&G’s image on the road and at work sites was what it needed to be. No task was too daunting or too insignificant. Gigantic jobs inspired him. He could see the final product, he’d say, and that gave him energy and drive where others might have felt overwhelmed. When health forced his early retirement at the end of 2013, Don continued to bring coffee to the shop on Tuesday mornings to stay connected with friends. He took pride in restoring antique cars, collecting numerous awards over the years for his handiwork. In the final year of his life, despite his health, he traveled around the country with his wife, Anne, visiting car shows. He was loyal, energetic and good humored and a valued member of the O&G community. Don passed on the 29th of July, at home with his family.

JOHN JENKINS had the demeanor and rugged looks of a man cut from the same bedrock he worked with every day. He oversaw operations at Quarry 2 in Southbury for 34 years, coaxing maximum production out of men and machinery. In 2006 he picked up the added assignment of cutting in a new quarry and plant, Quarry 5 in New Milford. It would be one of his last and best accomplishments at work. People respectfully saw John as “old school” with the kind of no-nonsense dedication and know-how that makes a man of high value. He began working for O&G in the early 1960s and left for a few years, moving to work for the Adriani family at Silliman Construction. When Francis Oneglia asked him to come back he politely deferred: the Adrianis had given him a job and he owed them, he said. When O&G bought Silliman a few years later John came with the deal and remained with O&G until his retirement in 2011. John loved to fish and he loved to hunt, and was good at both. John lost his courageous fight with lymphoma on July 24. He had just turned 75.

Gentlemen to the Rescue

It was around midnight on July 30 when a motorist traveling through O&G’s construction zone on I-95 in Norwalk pulled over with a driver’s side flat and traffic roaring by. And it was serendipity that Edgar Ortega (left) and Aldo Tartaglino happened on the scene in a matter of minutes. With her spare tire in place and without any grime on her hands the appreciative woman drove off into the night while her two rescuers went back to work.
Brian Ohler
Safety Manager

Lee Donaldson joined the Wethersfield High School project in August assisting primarily with schedule and change order management. He brings over 30 years of project leadership experience in the construction industry to O&G.

Robert Frank
Project Engineer

Robert Frank joined the team at the Wethersfield High School project in August as a Project Engineer. Robert is a graduate of the University of Connecticut with a degree in civil engineering.

Brittney Gustafson
HR Specialist

Brittney Gustafson joined O&G’s Human Resources Department in August as a Human Resources Specialist. Britney brings over seven years of experience in human resources administration.

Zack Mordenti
Project Engineer

Zack Mordenti has joined the Waterbury Bus Maintenance Facility project. He brings over a decade of construction experience to the position. He holds degrees in construction management and civil engineering.

Lee Donaldson
Project Manager

Lee Donaldson joined O&G’s Safety department in July as a Safety Manager. For the past four years he has consulted on safety issues for schools and hospitals and before that served as an M.P. in the U.S. Army for more than a decade.

Colin Pottbecker
Project Engineer

Colin Pottbecker joined O&G as a Project Engineer on the New Haven Rail Yard project. He is a recent graduate of Roger Williams University with a degree in architecture and an academic concentration on sustainability.

Carrie Rux
Senior Project Engineer

Carrie Rux joined the Wethersfield High School project in the winter of ’15. She brings over a decade of educational project leadership experience and holds a construction management degree and a USGBC LEED Green Associate designation.

Rick Voisine
Project Superintendent

Rick Voisine joined the I-95 Pavement Preservation project in Norwalk/Darien in June as a 2nd shift Project Superintendent. He has over 28 years of construction experience as a superintendent on heavy civil projects.

Brittney Gustafson
HR Specialist

Brittney Gustafson joined O&G’s Human Resources Department in August as a Human Resources Specialist. Britney brings over seven years of experience in human resources administration.

GREG MARGAITIS’s 38-year career at O&G began when his father thought he ought to be working between graduating from college and applying to medical school. Two days later he was learning how to dispatch concrete on Chase River Road with Bob Oneglia. He never looked back. “I loved it, I loved working with people to solve their problems. Every day you never knew what could change your plans.” He has high-praises for Bob Oneglia (“a genius for increasing the business”), for brothers Francis, George and Ray (“empire builders”) and for T.J. Oneglia, who oversaw the Materials Division when Greg retired (“cool, calm and 100% gentleman”). Greg would have worked longer but his wife of 40 years, Michelle, had a life-threatening fall that damaged her spine. Following her miraculous recovery he retired early to spend more time with her. They have been dividing their time between their house in Morris and their vacation home on the edge of the Adirondack Park where Greg can fish and hunt and soak in the panoramic vistas he loves.

JIMMY RODGER came to O&G a veteran safety manager of two of the world’s largest public works projects, both in Boston: the Deer Island Waste Water Treatment Project and “The Big Dig.” He signed on in 2009 as Safety Director when O&G built the Thomas Watson Generating Station south of Boston. From there he became Safety Director at the Kleen Energy Power Plant, then the New Haven Joint Venture, and ultimately directed O&G’s corporate safety program. Jimmy enhanced the culture of safety, doing so with, among other activities, quarterly get-togethers tailored to each group. He took pride in being named the top safety professional in Connecticut from 2011 thru 2013 by the AGCA and the CCIA. But timing is everything, he says: “I love construction and safety and people but it was time to retire.” Now his days are more devoted to his wife, Linda, their four children and seven grandkids whom “Papa” enjoys spoiling. Stays on the Cape and a trip to the tropics have taken the place of toolbox talks and safety training.
O&G is the parent company of a project team building a 63 mega-watt fuel cell park at a former O&G sand mine site in Beacon Falls, Connecticut. The project will hold the distinction of being the largest renewable energy fuel cell project in the world and utilize Connecticut-manufactured fuel cell technology.

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**Griffin Hospital Interventional Radiology Suite**  
**Derby, Connecticut**

O&G recently renovated 1,500 square feet of laboratory space to become Griffin Hospital’s new Interventional Radiology Suite. The multi-phase project kicked off this June and will be completed this fall. O&G worked with architect The S/L/A/M Collaborative.

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**Washington Montessori Field and Courts**  
**Washington, Connecticut**

O&G was awarded a design/build contract to construct a soccer field and tennis courts at the Washington Montessori School. The project includes extensive sitework and will feature a four-tennis-court, post-tensioned concrete system with a cushioned playing surface. Sitework began in June. The project is expected to be completed this fall.

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**Yale Sterling Power Plant**  
**New Haven, Connecticut**

O&G is repairing and replacing a structural concrete roof and support steel. Work has been performed while the power plant was operational and care was taken not to allow damage from concrete and weather. The plant supplies Yale-New Haven Hospital and Yale School of Medicine. Work began in June and will conclude this fall.
O&G has been named a Hearst Media Services 2015 Top Work Place.

We wish to extend a sincere thank you to all of our team members for their numerous contributions throughout the company.

COMING FIRST QUARTER 2016: #WOMENINCONSTRUCTION