A Company on the Go

A TRADITION OF CARING FOR PEOPLE

SHOWING THEIR STUFF

Across the company millennials are earning their places, dispelling negative stereotypes about their generation.

O&G Safety Captures National Award
Masonry Division Adds to Its Product Lines
Flying Colors for Stamford ABC’s Big Weekends
After Five Decades Ernie Torizzo Retires, Mostly

(L to R) Plant operator and mechanic Taylor Panagrosso, Tom Alexson, Jr., the company’s youngest quarry manager, and plant and equipment operator and mechanic Brendan Young help keep things humming in Southington.
A promise is a declaration that one will do a particular thing or that a particular thing will happen. At O&G we make hundreds, if not thousands, of them each day. We make them to ourselves and we make them to our customers.

Making promises is easy. Keeping them takes commitment. Our ability to fulfill the promises we make depends on the skills and dedication our workforce brings to bear each day. Like every other enterprise, O&G is becoming more dependent on younger generations of workers to help fulfill our obligations. Labor statistics tell us that millennials, those born between 1981 and 1996, now make up over one-third of the workforce. Unfortunately, they are getting a lot of negative attention these days.

Whether it’s a meme on social media or talk around the barbershop, millennials bear the brunt of today’s generational biases. They are portrayed as aloof and entitled, the “everyone gets a trophy” generation. They are criticized for avoiding responsibility, being unwilling to put in hard work or take on tough jobs. One could be led to believe that employers would be better off excluding the entire generation from their workforce.

At O&G we couldn’t disagree more. Today’s market demands that companies compete not only on quality and productivity standards but also on metrics pertaining to safety, health and the environment. This is where millennials excel. They have an innate understanding that including these factors in the planning process is integral to any task. They understand that these factors must all be linked to achieve success. Delivering excellence in all aspects of business is the expectation of our customers so we must deliver on our promise to meet and exceed their expectations. Our millennials are committed to doing just that.

In this newsletter you will hear from some of our outstanding, rising millennial team members. We could profile many more. Day after day, they dispel the stereotypes, get their hands dirty and prove their worth in an ever-more-complex work environment – and we thank them for their commitment.

T.J. Oneglia
Vice President, Materials Division
Zach Mordenti is typical of on-point, hard-working millennials across O&G. Recently promoted to project superintendent, he is currently overseeing site work and vertical construction at Knot’s Landing, a new retail development in Stratford.

SHOWING THEIR STUFF

Saturday Night Live skits lampoon the stereotype: the millennial announcing to her boss that she deserves a raise, with her head down and thumbs tapping on a smart phone: “I’ve been here three whole days.” Or the guy and girl two feet apart, texting their affections to each other.

Expecting instant gratification. Glued to their technology. Slow to mature. Late to launch. The “me me me generation.” Those are the convenient caricatures of young adults whose lot it was to be born between 1981 and 1996, Generation Y, the millennials.

And like all broad-brush stereotypes, they’re also largely untrue.
Workforce surveys, including a large one conducted by IBM, show the remarkable similarities – within a few percentage points – in the long-term, work/life goals held by millennials, the Gen Xers who preceded them and the baby boomers who preceded the Xers. Generation to generation, individuals are willing to put in the effort to see their corporate and personal goals met.

“I don’t think the change we see in the workforce is defined solely by the year people were born,” says Heavy Civil Division Vice President Ryan Oneglia. In decades past more workers came to O&G with skills picked up working on farms or attending trade schools. Gene McKeon was an example, remembers Oneglia. He started with O&G in his teens. He would talk about watching construction on the streets of Torrington when he should have been in elementary school. “It was a lot more hands-on then. Today it’s much more about literacy than before,” is Oneglia’s observation. He cites plans and specifications, for instance. “Look at plans from the 1890s to the 1940s. A bridge was designed on one page. Today, that bridge would be 500 pages and another 1,000 pages of specifications.” Different times demand different skills.

Joining O&G when he was 22, Pete Hinman has worked his way up to project superintendent in the Heavy Civil Division where he has supervised laborers on road and bridge projects the last six years. Finding and keeping exceptional young workers is often on his mind. Hinman sizes up the differences in today’s young workers and plays to their strengths. “We look for young people who stand out and then we support their choices,” Hinman says with a determined tone. “There are ten ways to get from point A to point B. When I see someone who thinks outside the typical box to come to a great solution, I know I’ve found one.” That’s the beginning.
When you find a standout you’ve got to know how to support him or her. People in that millennial age bracket, they’re looking for guidance and training. I can’t just throw them into situations and see who survives. Some will, for sure, but I don’t want to lose the ones who would make it with some hands-on support. I have to do my part as well.

I also believe recognition goes a long way with young workers. After you train them and they’re on point you need to reward them. Some recognition on the job goes a long way with this generation – but who doesn’t like to be recognized when they’re giving 110 percent? That’s not a generational thing.

“Sometimes the minority speaks the loudest and creates the stereotype,” says Mike Brennan, Building Group Vice President. But he disregards it. There are timeless traits he looks for when interviewing candidates for a position, regardless of age: manners, work ethic, wisdom “in all forms,” and perhaps above all other qualities, a humility that he has seen translate into an openness to learn.

“Crying out loud, I’m sure millennials are stereotyping me at my age,” he laughs. It reminds Brennan to avoid doing the same. “It keeps me from thinking I know all about someone after 30 seconds. It goes back to not judging a book by its cover. That old axiom has never been truer than today.”

“Material Division Vice President T.J. Oneglia is happy to see millennials across the company demolishing negative notions about young workers: “The millennial generation gets a bad rap. I think too often we hear those stereotypes and that’s what we expect. We have many great team players who happen to be young. They consistently go above and beyond. They prove that the future of this company will be in good hands.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6
**Project Superintendent**

4 years with O&G

**How do you handle challenges?** I guess I thrive in the pressure-packed situations this industry seems to constantly throw at you. The challenges of finding the safest and timeliest sequences with maximum efficiency to complete a project are what I look forward to – I don’t dread that since it’s what defines us at O&G to the clients we’re serving. At the end of the day I have the opportunity to take what are lines on paper and turn them into a tangible, three-dimensional product – that’s extremely rewarding.

**How was it becoming “the boss?”** Being younger it wasn’t easy. I had to prove myself and earn everyone’s respect. You need to be able to communicate, learn the pros and cons of other people and learn how to work with them. Sometimes I find myself fixing my own social skills in the process.

**Any words of wisdom for other millennials, or anyone for that matter?** I was raised “old school.” My dad always told me since I was young to be the herder and not the sheep, and money doesn’t make the man. Never settle for what you’ve got. These are all words I live by.

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**Project Engineer**

2 years with O&G

**Do you encounter the millennial stereotype?** All the time. My attitude is just to prove it wrong. I held two jobs going to college full time and finished my bachelor’s with three kids under four. I went to school full time when I was pregnant, even the last two months on modified bed rest. I don’t think I fit the millennial stereotype!

**As you help manage construction projects, what guides you?** Knowing how the pieces come together to build the job, and building relationships with subs, PMs, owners and design teams to get the work done.

**Is construction a career you’d recommend?** It’s loud, stressful and fast-paced. If you don’t keep the end goal in mind, seeing the building completed and working toward that, you are probably not going to enjoy the journey. But any career in construction can be amazingly rewarding and you can make a good living at it.

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**Project Engineer**

1 year with O&G

**How will your generation be regarded 20 years from now?** The same way every other generation has. It’s not the first time older people have said, ‘These rotten kids are going to ruin everything.’ We aren’t different, we’re just growing up in a time with different circumstances.

**What’s your response to the negative millennial image?** I use humility, interpersonal skills and my work ethic to prove them wrong.

**What advances someone in your field?** Doing your work faster and better. I want to achieve more work in less time. No one does their best when ‘all they do is work.’ I want to get 60 hours done in 40 hours because my life includes time for family and friends. I want a life that is fruitful and balanced.
National Recognition
At the 2019 National Convention of the AGC of America in Denver, Colorado, O&G’s Safety Department was presented with the Willis Towers Watson Award for Safety Excellence. O&G received the first-place award in the vendor/supplier category for its comprehensive, innovative safety programs, for excellent, measurable safety performance and for ownership buy-in and participation. The award is regarded as the most prestigious in the U.S. construction industry and places O&G among the most committed and innovative construction companies in the country. On hand to receive the award were Aaron Mednick, Building Group Vice President (second from left) and Mike Ferry, Chief Safety Officer (holding award).

A Place Among the World’s Best
In the hills of rural Dover, New York, Bechtel Corporation is nearing completion of a 1,000 megawatt electric generating facility for its client, Cricket Valley Energy LLC. When the state-of-the-art Cricket Valley Energy Center comes on line in 2020 it will generate enough power to supply nearly a million homes and be the cleanest such plant in the state. O&G’s Heavy Civil Division was one of the first contractors mobilized by Bechtel. O&G crews performed all the site work for the Center, two entrances and two large material storage areas nearby. O&G also supplied and installed concrete throughout. Despite the fast pace, O&G’s compliance with Bechtel’s Environmental, Safety and Health Program Plan was among the best Bechtel had ever observed, according to the company. O&G earned a score of 97 out of 100 for meeting and exceeding requirements. Bechtel also honored O&G recently with a 2018-2019 Supply Chain Award, chosen among its many projects around the globe for excellent teamwork and “exceeding project expectations in safety, performance, technical expertise and environmental compliance.” Heavy Civil Division President David Oneglia (right) and Project Manager John Rouleau received the award at the October 3 event in Reston, Virginia where the company is headquartered. Family-led for five generations, Bechtel is ranked as America’s largest construction company.
SaFetY WeeK 2019

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT  Safety Department members Dan Walker, Robin Listorti, Matt Dmyterko, Mike Ferry and Tom Halpin serve up lunch at the Stamford safety stand down; Brittney Therien, Tyson Burk and Safety Manager Nick Ferro pass out Safety Week t’s to over 200 workers at the Grasso Tech safety stand down and pig roast; sports medicine guest presenter leads mechanics at Stamford Repair through stretches to avoid soft-tissue stress; some 2,000 attended the Touch a Truck family and community event in Torrington; John Rouleau (center) and Tim Barberet discussed the unique safety requirements of the Cricket Valley Energy Center project with guests from the Main Office.

DRIVING THE MESSaGE hOME  O&G’s 2019 Annual Safety Meeting featured an expert presentation by Kyle Zimmer of Operating Engineers Local 478 entitled, “Time to Get Uncomfortable.” The presentation equipped supervisors with tools to spot and address mental health and addiction issues. Reinforcing this message six months later in October, addiction and mental health stand downs were conducted at all O&G job sites and facilities. Kyle Zimmer again presented, along with representatives from other trade unions. “O&G has been the preeminent voice of support for this vital program in Connecticut,” said Zimmer, ABOvE, LEFt T0 RigHt At the South Main Maintenance Facility in Torrington, Safety Manager Dan Walker opens the event; Kyle Zimmer shares anecdotes, strategies and resources for recovery; more than 50 maintenance staff attended the presentation.

SAFETY WEEK 2019

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT  Safety Department members Dan Walker, Robin Listorti, Matt Dmyterko, Mike Ferry and Tom Halpin serve up lunch at the Stamford safety stand down; Brittney Therien, Tyson Burk and Safety Manager Nick Ferro pass out Safety Week t’s to over 200 workers at the Grasso Tech safety stand down and pig roast; sports medicine guest presenter leads mechanics at Stamford Repair through stretches to avoid soft-tissue stress; some 2,000 attended the Touch a Truck family and community event in Torrington; John Rouleau (center) and Tim Barberet discussed the unique safety requirements of the Cricket Valley Energy Center project with guests from the Main Office.
Protective posts, called bollards, were to be installed, 116 of them, at access points to the arena where crowds concentrate for games, graduations and other big events. In a worst-case scenario, these bollards would help protect pedestrians from any vehicle intending to do harm.

Through its long association with UK-based manufacturer Marshalls, O&G pitched the University on a unique, shallow-mounting bollard system manufactured by the company. England and other European countries have been devising innovative systems to thwart vehicle attacks for some time, longer than US companies. Marshalls' RhinoGuard™ shallow-mount bollards are able to stop a heavy vehicle impacting at high-speed. Installed only six inches below grade, they are also quicker to install than the bollards originally specified on UConn's plans.

It was O&G Architectural Representative Ben Canino's job to bring the alternative bollard to the project team's attention. "From the minute I received the lead from Bob Rizzo [O&G Vice President, Masonry Division] it became a solid collaborative effort between Marshalls USA and O&G," he says.

Canino is quick to point out the contributions of Jonathan Berry from Marshalls. "Jonathan joined me in presenting the advantages and capabilities we brought as manufacturer and supplier." Berry’s expertise with the bollard system and his communication skills – Canino calls them stellar – were significant assets.

Canino first approached the company that would be installing the bollards. Milton C. Beebe and Sons was the general contractor and Glen Burnham was managing the job. "Glen was prepared to install the bollards specified on the plans but he came on board with the switch to Marshalls' system when we laid out all the installation advantages. O&G being local and ready to support him as he worked with this new product I know helped his buy-in."

Next Canino and Berry paid a series of calls on Sean Sanger of Copley Wolff, the Boston-based landscape architect who specified the original system. Through meetings, presentations and phone calls, Sanger, like Burnham, saw the upside to the switch. "When it came to discussing an alternate system to the one he had specified, Sean was open-minded and engaged. We provided him with all the technical information he requested," says Canino, "and then we tailored our system in response to his and the University’s requirements. Sean was great to work with, too."

The final challenge was convincing Ian Dann, whose department oversees site planning and landscape architecture at the University. "Ian was like the rest of the team, willing to look at the advantages our bollard system would bring to the job. It was clear that everyone was looking for a solution that would be in UConn’s best interest."

As much as the advantages of the product were key, the contractor, architect and UConn were just as encouraged by O&G’s reputation as a reliable, local distributor who supports its products. They appreciated O&G’s ability to warehouse bollards arriving from the UK and then deliver them to the site when needed. "We presented a complete package that gave them an improved solution to their security challenges," says Canino. "We’re local, we’re here to stay and we’re here to support. We became a part of the team and the project went very, very well."

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New Offerings at O&G from Marshalls USA

Marshalls’ complete line of handsome and rugged “street furniture” is now available from O&G. In addition to standard and made-to-order bollards, there are seating, litter bin and post and rail options in a range of designs and colors. All use the company’s Ferrocast® construction with an engineering grade polyurethane cast around a solid steel core for strength and an extra pigmented polyurethane overcoat for scratch resistance and durability in the elements. Contact Ben Canino at (860) 840-4637 or Marty Paganini at (860) 480-4637 for more details on landscape protective products.
ABC, shorthand for ACCELERATED BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION, SAVES TIME, REDUCES COST, IS SAFER AND MINIMIZES INCONVENIENCE TO THE MOTORING PUBLIC TREMENDOUSLY. CTDOT AND O&G PUT IT TO WORK IN STAMFORD, METICULOUSLY BUILDING TWO REPLACEMENT BRIDGE SECTIONS ALONGSIDE AGING BRIDGE 307 THAT CARRIES US ROUTE 1 OVER I-95. THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS OF THE YEAR-LONG PROJECT HUNG ON TWO SYNCHRONIZED, NON-STOP MARATHON WEEKENDS WHEN THE OLD BRIDGE WOULD COME DOWN AND THE NEW WOULD BE SET INTO PLACE, ALL WHILE THE CLOCK WAS TICKING.
These photos capture major steps in demolishing and rebuilding Bridge 307 carrying US Route 1 over I-95 in Stamford, in two sections over two weekends this past June. On both weekends O&G crews safely returned I-95 and Route 1 to normal operation nearly 24 hours ahead of schedule. For its innovation and successful execution the project has won two major industry awards to-date.

1 The 2.1-million-pound replacement bridge unit that will sit above I-95N rests on the mock abutments (yellow) where it was built, waiting to be moved and set into final position on the first weekend

Saturday morning...

2 Slabs cut from the old Route 1 bridge deck expose the girders beneath and are removed and trucked away to be processed

3 A Manitowoc 220-ton crane has crawled into position down a protective earthen ramp built and compacted on top of I-95, and waits to pick and remove girders as they are cut free from the abutments

Saturday afternoon...

4 The laborious process of removing the old girders continues above I-95’s northbound lanes. They are lifted away and swung to an adjacent staging area where they will be cut in half and trucked off-site

5 The final girder over I-95N is removed

Saturday evening...

6,7 Preparation continues and exposed abutments are cleaned and leveled as needed to accommodate the new bridge unit going over I-95S

Saturday night...

8 A new earthen ramp is built over I-95 and two “lanes” of steel plates like this one are positioned to support the 208 tires of the self-propelled modular transporters (SPMTs) that will carry the massive bridge unit into position

9 The crew from team member ALE Heavy Lift maneuvers the SPMTs into place

10 The second bridge unit, on the second weekend, rests just above the abutment, its final position being confirmed before the SPMTs lower it, unhook and drive away

Watch CTDOT’s time-lapse video of Bridge 307’s construction, demolition and replacement

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vean-1BFF1g
The farewell luncheon and well-wishes had barely faded when Ernie Torizzo hopped a plane to Munich where he and three acquaintances would ride BMW motorcycles through the Alps.

At 79, Torizzo remains forward-looking and interesting. Sitting in his large office, uncluttered but filled with tools of his trade and memorabilia and family photographs, he remembers all the years that, he swears, have flown by.

Torizzo worked as an estimator nearly all his 55 years with the company. That was after some years managing projects for the Building Group and one year before that field-testing something Xerox had just released called a desktop copier. He had worked for his father’s electrical business between college years when he studied electrical engineering, so he knew some about bidding electrical work. He came under the wing of MIT-educated George Mahoney in 1964. Torizzo learned as he went and would eventually succeed Mahoney, overseeing all the Building Group’s bids.

“I saved every bid we ever won,” he says, nodding over his shoulder to cabinets somewhere down the hall. “We bid about every three weeks – they give you three weeks to bid. You could be bidding every week when there are multiples going on.” Considering that he’s tracked bids for almost six decades, that’s a mountain of work, and useful data, he and his estimators have compiled.

The soft-spoken Torizzo talks about the special expertise estimators develop. Earth work, concrete, steel, finish work – it seems everyone has a specialty. He prefers people focus on what they’re natural at. That’s the piece of the bid puzzle they supply.

Preparing bids is a good deal about ticking clocks and deadlines, and utter failure if your bid arrives at the client’s one minute after their deadline. It was especially hectic when faxes and pay phones were how eleventh-hour input came in from your subcontractors. Often you called in the final numbers to your man stationed outside the customer’s who would ink them on the bid document and run into the client’s to hand it in just under the wire. Waiting until the competing bids were reviewed and the winner announced later that day were stress-filled but tantalizing. “You waited for that phone call,” he says, with a hint of a grin. “I loved the suspense.”

In his twenties Torizzo married Anita Oneglia, the youngest daughter of O&G co-founder Andrew Oneglia and youngest sister of Francis, Raymond and George. They’re together 55 years later. They raised two sons who unsurprisingly have their father’s technical inclinations. Jon is an environmental engineer working in the oil and natural gas industry in Colorado, Andres and his wife, Margaret, own a storm water design business in Vermont. The boys rock climb and, like their father, ski. Ernie will ski as long as he’s able. Last year it was Aspen, Colorado, this winter should be Stowe, Vermont.

He has figured the ways he’ll remain physically and mentally active. They include riding motorcycles. He has five Ducatis, two BMWs and a rare Motus, one of just 250 made before the company folded. He winks as he stretches the truth about hiding new acquisitions from Anita. He says he plays a shell game, using the same bike covers to disguise new bikes when old ones leave. In 30 years he’s had only one serious accident, in Pennsylvania riding to Colorado, which mercifully gave him nothing more than bruises and cracked ribs. “I’ve hit a few deer, too, but that’s about it.”

He’ll continue hiking with his dog, a Vizsla named Linus rescued from the Midwest. Linus is “a godsend.” It’s his third energetic Vizsla. True to form, Torizzo has done some estimating where his dogs and he are concerned. He and his first two hiked 4,000 miles; he and Linus are approaching 2,000 miles. Hiking – all seasons, daylight or with a headlamp, in the quiet and away from the pressing things – fills him with peace. It counterbalances the demands of work.

He swims twice a week. He does yoga once a week. In his welding shop he’s sketching out plans for his first sculpture: “I do a pose in yoga, looks like an airplane. That’s going to be my first sculpture.”

All the work history Torizzo and his estimators have amassed segues neatly into the assignment he’s carved out for himself during retirement, because he’s not ready to just turn the working world off. “I’ll be building a database of our field productivity. We kept good production records of all the work we self-performed.” Once the pencil-on-paper records are entered, that new database will give the dozen Building Group estimators the advantage of specific-to-O&G histories to reference as they prepare bids.

So Ernie will be around, just not on the payroll. “I have to say I feel sorry for people who don’t like their work. I enjoyed what I did. It’s going to be difficult cutting back. It’s almost like I blinked and the years were gone.”
Ever since he lied to get his union book early at age 16, CRAIG TRUAX was an unrelenting worker. Over his 25 years with O&G’s Heavy Civil Division he was an expert in building with concrete. Truax retired at the end of May. He and his wife, Teresa, moved to a home they bought several years ago in a small place called Longs, South Carolina, a 15-minute drive to the beach. “I’m from upstate New York. What did I know about oceans?” Truax smirks. “But Teresa got me hooked on the beach.” For all his working years he was hooked on concrete. “If I’m pouring concrete, I’m happy,” he says. On days between pours when he was doing other work for the company, he still had his trademark unlit cigar, and his muscled forearms were ghosted with a pale whitewash of concrete from the last job he was on. Those who know Truax praise his skill, his dependability and how hard he always worked. He was so deep into his work as a labor foreman, not just directing his crew but literally knee deep in it himself, that he’d leave at the end of the day coated with concrete. Friends would joke that they’d have to order an extra yard of concrete when Truax worked a job. They’d joke about the number of washing machines Teresa must have gone through. Giving his cigar a chew, Truax mulls it over for a bit and sums up his years with O&G. “What can I say – I’ve worked on great projects here and with a long list of great people. It’s been positive all the way through. This company’s been very good to me and my family.”

KEN FARONI retired a specialist, the only person tasked with the minutia and occasional drama of keeping the company’s mining operations permitted and neighbors content. He handled the paperwork and personalities involved in establishing new mining opportunities as well. For 31 years, Faroni was all about regulations and statutes and nighttime meetings, a one-man legal and PR firm bridging O&G and its community neighbors. You can see why he was very good at it. He’s as approachable as an old friend, seasons his conversations with humor, makes the technical understandable. And he has a command of the rules with which every quarry must comply, drilled down to their deepest details. He deadpans, “I’m not an attorney but I slept at a Holiday Inn once,” explaining that most appearances before town or city commissions he made without any legal consul. “We’ve only been denied a permit once, no twice, that I can recall.” He recounts one of those denials when at least 250 townspeople showed up for a public hearing. “First the mayor spoke against our application, then his mother did, then a young woman holding a baby. It was clear the application wasn’t going to fly. When asked for closing remarks, unflappable and always ready for humor, he said he regretted he didn’t bring his mother to speak. Everyone laughed. Faroni parried the verbal thrusts of town meetings without ever taking them personally which explains why, in retirement, he looks forward to having a beer with a few of his most persistent gadflies.

If you were to pick people at O&G with a high profile in the community, who pop up volunteering at all sorts of charitable and community events, LEO MARTIGNENI could be at the top of your list. You, in fact, very likely know more about the things he’s done to help other people than what he did over his 44 years with O&G. True to his self-effacing nature, that’s no surprise. Martigneni began as a nighttime computer operator in 1975 when the company’s shiny new IBM System 3 was driven by punch cards and required someone to tend it. That was Leo, who after his day job would come to Wall Street to run data through the machine, through the night. After joining O&G full-time and with a degree in data processing under his belt, Martigneni continued working “back office,” supporting the company as it grew. And he grew with the technology, retiring a senior systems analyst and programmer. He’s done – and will continue doing – so much to help the community. (“O&G and the Oneglia’s have been supportive in many of my volunteer activities,” he says. “They’ve always been like family.”) Committee chair of military remembrances, Salvation Army bell ringer, Kidsplay volunteer, rappelling towers for charities, sleeping outside in a cardboard box in winter for a homeless shelter, a penguin plunge for Special Olympics. And on and on. Why? “I give back to my community and with that comes helping and meeting people and doing different things, which I love. I just look for opportunities and say, ‘I’d like to do that!’ It’s how he’s programmed.

Calling It a Career
My Days at O&G: Nick Pedrolini

After summer and winter internships with the company’s Special Projects Group, followed by another summer working with the Building Group, and mingled inbetween with an on-campus internship in UConn’s building function seeing projects from the owner’s side, O&G recognized potential and scooped him up as a project engineer.

But fate pitched a changeup. Pedrolini joined O&G just as the Building Group was beginning to roll out comprehensive construction project management software. Called Aconex, it was being proof-tested at the Groton Consolidated Middle School where Pedrolini was the project engineer. He was a sensible pick to become an Aconex trainer: he holds a civil engineering degree and a construction management minor, is gaining hands-on project management expertise and, being a millennial, is at home with things new and digital.

Pedrolini began learning the software with Nick Castler, O&G’s resident BIM authority and another millennial talent at O&G. Supported by a representative from computer technology giant Oracle, who developed Aconex, they drilled down into the software’s capabilities to put together a template tailored to the way the Building Group runs its projects. Aconex basic training is happening for O&G’s project managers, project engineers and superintendents. Pedrolini and Castler, with Project Executive Dave Cravanzola demonstrating the software’s cost management capabilities, will continue until all have been introduced to the program.

Aconex shines as it merges the best capabilities of diverse management software – this program for documents, that program for emails, another for financials, etcetera – into a single, high-powered solution. Training sessions cover a lot of new territory and the flow of steps and methods can be overwhelming. But Pedrolini understands that articulating the end game, in this case the benefits of putting Aconex to work, lifts eyes up and out of the weeds to catch the reason behind the steep learning curve: the greatly improved time savings, collaboration, transparency and control the team and clients will get building with Aconex.

Even with guidance from Oracle, Pedrolini has learned the most from experimentation, trying solutions that seem logical and retaining what works best. He encourages the same “no fear” approach when he trains. “Now that projects are using the standards we developed, people naturally want to know the one ‘right way.’ But every project is unique. My goal is to empower users so they feel confident enough to work through their own questions as they get familiar with the standards and tailor them to their specific project.”

For Aconex to work efficiently, all parties on a project have to use it. So his training extends to all project team members – architects, architect’s consultants, subcontractors. At Groton, Pedrolini, says, “I was fielding calls constantly from everyone at the beginning.” He answered questions, and he coached. “We convince our team members they have to be on board so we are all coordinating work in the same space. If they’re not on Aconex, we’re doubling up tasks again. My job is to show them it makes their lives easier.”

Pedrolini remembers his first big project as an intern with O&G, before Aconex, where O&G built a large bus maintenance facility in Watertown. Project Manager Hristo Miljovski encouraged him as he learned O&G’s ropes. On a recent, sunny fall morning at O&G’s Main Office, Miljovski joined other PMs in a conference room to learn the basics of Aconex from Pedrolini. “Hristo showed me how things worked when I was an intern. He was my mentor in Watertown and now I get to pay it back and guide him with Aconex. That’s a pretty interesting dynamic. It’s very cool.”

With all its efficiencies Aconex has freed Pedrolini up to walk the job site at Groton more often and learn about the building going up, not just deal with managing the paperwork. “I like the actual building side of a project,” he says, “and I have always liked being with people and talking with people, helping them.” Which is why he’s proving his worth as an Aconex authority out in the field.
Recognized

- O&G Vice Chairman Raymond Oneglia was honored with a Distinguished Achievement Award from the Construction Institute for the numerous, significant contributions Oneglia has made to the construction industry and the larger community over the decades in Connecticut. He received the award at CI’s Annual Membership Dinner in Hartford.

- The Connecticut Construction Industries Association presented a Community Service Award to O&G for its work in support of veterans organizations. Among the company’s commitments under its “Operation Vets” banner were the supply of concrete and stone for several projects and the construction of a storage building at the Fisher House in West Haven.

- O&G received another national Top 400 Contractors Award from Engineering News Record. O&G was ranked in the top 300 nationally, based on volume of business for 2019.

- In his 39th year with O&G, Building Group Vice President Mike Brennan received a Central Connecticut State University Construction Industry Award for his “outstanding commitment to the construction community.” Brennan, shown with his wife Nancy, was invited to speak to the many undergraduates in attendance and focused on the indispensability of character and passion in pursuing a career in construction.

- Another Platinum Level Safety Award from the Connecticut Construction Industries Association went to O&G for meeting and exceeding national safety statistics.

- For his efforts as an advocate for minority contractors in construction, O&G Building Group Estimator Mark Carroll was honored as a Minority Business Enterprise Advocate by the Minority Construction Council at an awards ceremony in Bloomfield this past fall.

- So far the Accelerated Bridge Construction project replacing Bridge 37 over I-95 in Stamford (see pages 10-11) has garnered two awards since its completion in October: the Arthur Gruhn Excellence in Construction Award and a Florida International University National ABC Conference Award.
Building Group Project Superintendent Matt Olshefski has made for himself and O&G a special relationship with the Town of Plainville. He’s led two career days at Plainville High. He’s presented a U.S. flag flown over the Capitol in Washington to the Wheeler Elementary School as he made a speech thanking staff and students. And with his team, he brought the Wheeler renovations in under budget three months ahead of schedule. “On behalf of Frank T. Wheeler Elementary School,” wrote Principal Andrew Batchelder, “thank you for your kindness, trustworthiness, your sense of humor, and your support and positive interactions with students, staff, and parents at Wheeler School.” It was no wonder Plainville Community Schools made sure to include Olshefski when they bestowed Community Hero Awards in a ceremony this past fall.

At Shepaug Valley School in Washington, high schoolers interested in construction as a career participated in Shepaug Builds, a teaching and exploration program offered by O&G that used the construction taking place at their school for real-world learning examples. Project Manager Tim Chan and his project team shared their expertise with the students weekly over six months. Near the end of the 2018-2019 edition, two teams of students went head-to-head to see which could most quickly and correctly build a Lego White House (left) using the planning and scheduling principles they’d learned.

Paving Foreman Dave Dufour, Jr. (center) is doing what he loves and it shows – coaching a talented AAU basketball travel team in the Next Gen Basketball Program he started. While his young son plays on an AAU team, Dufour coaches and cajoles a girls squad now in the 10th grade. This is Dufour’s third season leading the girls, who came off a Jr. NBA Tournament in New Jersey this past summer winning their bracket. He’s involved off the court, too, especially with fundraisers that help families cover tournament costs, uniforms and awards and that provide high school scholarships.

Another successful edition of Making Strides Against Breast Cancer took place this fall, once again at White Memorial in Litchfield. O&G sponsors the Survivor’s Tent, staffed by volunteers like Rhonda Cote (center with sash), herself a survivor and one of the principle organizers in the company. “We all pull together to make this a success. We’ve got a committee and we locate food donations, make pink scarves to hand out – lots of good things like that.” The scarves and other small but useful items are handed out to survivors in the pink-ribbon drawstring backpacks O&G provides. O&G’s Powerful in Pink team raised over $6,000 during the event.
Short takes

TOP TO BOTTOM

Luminaries were on hand this past fall for the ceremonial ribbon cutting at the new Ella T. Grasso Technical High School in Groton. O&G’s CM team saw that the educational and administrative spaces in the 219,000SF facility were functional for the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year, and have shifted into the final phases of the project (see page 19). Among the dignitaries assembled for the dedication and ribbon cutting were Governor Ned Lamont with Commissioner of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona and U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal.

The beam they signed was a perfect choice. It would soon be one of the final beams tying together the old school with the new wing O&G was building at Shepaug Valley School in Washington. Teenagers from the school’s new agriscience program were the first to pen their names on the freshly painted white beam, using bright blue markers in a nod to the school’s Spartan blue. Next to sign were members of Shepaug’s administration, the Board of Education, the Building Committee, the school’s resource officer, first selectmen from towns in the regional school’s catchment area, representatives from architect Kaestle Boos Associates, subcontractors building the school and O&G project team members.

When Administrator Lydia Babbitt surreptitiously filled in on a cannon crew she was a twelve-year-old helping her father complete a six-man adult crew on short notice. And in short order she had mastered sighting the cannon to hit bullseyes downrange in competitions. Firing homemade lead-tipped, grout-filled steel juice cans at a target one hundred yards away at one such competition in Ohio, New York, the crew scored four bullseyes, one after the other, with Lydia sighting the gun (a bullseye is about four inches around). It was enough to win them a national championship and apparently enough to convince the more rigid members of the old guard to vote her the first female member. Several decades later, the First Litchfield Artillery Regiment aims to serve at ceremonial events like parades and the starts of road races when the mere pop of a pistol won’t do. Performing the cannonades of the 1812 overture is a special treat. “When we start firing, nobody’s really listening to the music anymore,” she says with a wink.
Cutler and West Side Elementary Schools  O&G has been named construction manager for this pair of PK-5 elementary schools in Groton. At 75,000SF and $45M and $47M respectively, both schools feature a multi-story classroom wing connected to an administrative and assembly building. Both schools include a media center, cafeteria and gymnasium. Designed by project architect Perkins Eastman, they will meet Connecticut High Performance Building Standards. They will be built simultaneously on existing middle school sites. Students will relocate from the existing Cutler and West Side Middle Schools into the new Groton Consolidated Middle School building (see below). Work on the new elementary schools will begin in the spring and wrap up in time for the start of the 2021-22 academic year. These are the fourth and fifth school projects for the Town of Groton.

Groton Consolidated Middle School  O&G’s CM team is directing the construction of a $67M middle school that will merge two current facilities into one. The school, with its four interconnected

The I-91/I-84/Route 15 “Congestion Buster” Has Begun

Relief for the backups that frequently clog the Charter Oak Bridge in Hartford is on its way. Teamed with familiar joint venture partner Barletta Heavy Division of Canton, Massachusetts, O&G’s Heavy Civil Division is busy working on the sprawling, $213M, three-year project that will make critical major improvements to the interchange where I-91 North intersects Route 15 North and I-84 East and traffic tie-ups have been the norm.

On the Move
a sampling of new projects at O&G
GRASSO TECH WELCOMES STUDENTS  The Building Group’s project team at Ella T. Grasso Technical High School in Groton completed the state-of-the-art, $96M, 219,000SF facility right on time for a September ribbon cutting. Crews have since shifted into the final phases of the project, focused on abatement and demolition of the old high school and building a 16-bay bus garage and a new stadium and playing fields. Those phases are scheduled for completion in December.

buildings totaling 168,000SF, emphasizes STEM, band, theater, A/V and graphic arts spaces. A new synthetic turf field will also be built. Turnover is slated for June 2020. Project architect is The S/L/A/M Collaborative; Arcadis represents the owner. (*The school sits next to Grasso Tech, shown above.*)

**O’Connell Athletic Center**  O&G is construction manager for a 36,000SF addition to the O’Connell Athletic Center at the University of St. Joseph in West Hartford. Valued at $16M, the project will add a 1,100-seat basketball arena as home court for the University’s first-ever Division III men’s basketball team. Work is underway and will be completed in the spring of 2021. Project architect is JFC Architecture.

**Woodrow Wilson Middle School**  Work began this summer at the site of this existing middle school in Middletown with selected demolition, site work and relocation of critical services. The 172,000SF, $97M, three-story steel structure features a three-story atrium, exterior limestone and brownstone veneer and metal cladding. A state-of-the-art auditorium with high-end finishes is included. The new school will be turned over in October of 2021. O&G is serving in a dual capacity as the owner’s project manager and as CM at risk. TSKP Studio is the project architect.

**O&G SPECIAL PROJECTS GROUP:**  Hartford Healthcare Litchfield MOB In its first project for Hartford HealthCare, Special Projects is converting a 5,000SF former retail space into medical offices and examination rooms. Demolition began in July and the new facility will be turned over in the winter of 2020.

**O&G SPECIAL PROJECTS GROUP:**  Rewak Pumping Station Upgrade The fifth project performed for Aquarion Water Company by Special Projects in the last five years, O&G is in Darien making $2M worth of improvements that include sitework, paving, construction of a new water treatment facility and installation of a new pump and water treatment equipment. Crews will finish in the spring of 2020.

**O&G SPECIAL PROJECTS GROUP:**  Installation of Office Walls In Norwalk, Special Projects is fitting out five floors of office space with DIRTT modular walls – floor-to-ceiling partitions that can be easily repositioned without the dust or waste of typical wall construction. This $500,000, five-month project is the third DIRTT project for client Greenbox Interior Solutions. O&G is a certified installer of DIRTT (for “Doing It Right This Time”) sustainable, customizable wall systems and millwork.
thank you, again

O&G was named a Connecticut Top Workplace based on employee feedback – one of only 50 named, for the fifth year in a row.