Leadership and Relationship

Francis J. Oneglia
1920–2008

On the second anniversary of the passing of Francis Oneglia, one of O&G’s “founding brothers,” we reflect on an exemplary life of contribution – to O&G Industries, to its people and to the greater community.

The three Oneglia brothers – Francis, Raymond and George – made an irresistible force together, a force that developed O&G from a local, one-garage outfit to one of the largest, most diverse contractors in New England. “Those three together couldn’t be beat,” Sonny Savanella would say.

Each brother contributed his gifts. Ray was described as the visionary and the driving engine, George as the detail man in the trenches keeping things running. Francis was, as friend Isadore Temkin said, “the front man.” Though all brothers had a deep, shared commitment to community, Francis was perhaps the one most often identified as the public face of O&G Industries.

He was a peacemaker, a problem-solver, unflappable and steady. He was approachable and friendly, and it seemed he could talk to anyone about anything.

A deep contradiction, but one that makes perfect sense upon reflection, was his dogged refusal to talk to anyone about his experiences in World War II.

“The Front Man” It was all about relationships for Francis Oneglia, whose unflappable demeanor and belief in people earned him the respect and admiration of employees across the company. He was often the public face of O&G and honorably represented the company in the community and the state.
Assigned to the 7th Armored Division, the young private slugged his way across Europe on foot and in the belly of heavy fighting machines. It was only at Francis’ wake, more than 60 years after the war, that a family friend and former serviceman recognized his medals and told the family that Francis had been in several tough, grinding battles. They had no idea. Just once, to a grandson and fellow veteran, did Francis ever discuss the time his platoon crept into a snowy Belgian village during the Battle of the Bulge. He would only say that of the 32 men who went in, eight made it out. He was awarded a battlefield commission that day that promoted him to command as a lieutenant. He would not say more.

Childhood friend Art Perrot grew up alongside Francis in Torrington. “Franny was always a conscientious kid and a gifted athlete. Always a good student, too.” Foreshadowing the leadership drive that would mark him as a man, young Francis would organize a neighborhood baseball team and book games at Newbury Corners against other neighborhood teams from around town.

Francis was a gifted athlete. While he earned a civil engineering degree at Worcester Polytechnic, he established a scoring record on the basketball court that stood for 25 years. And he loved sports, all sports. He enjoyed rubbing shoulders with sports celebrities Dee Rowe, Bobby Cox and Bob Cousey, men who became Francis’ good friends. He bore a passing resemblance to Cousey and delighted in having been asked for an autograph once. And golf: it became his game as time marched on. It was as much the camaraderie as the game itself.

Personally and on behalf of the company, Francis was a liberal contributor. He loved to see surplus used to benefit the less fortunate and to further worthy causes. He served as president, director, trustee and corporator of public and private companies and charitable organizations, volunteering his talent and his connections to further their causes.

He was composed in the gale. Even temper was a Francis Oneglia trademark. It took an inordinate assault on his sense of right and wrong for his temper to flare. And even when it did it was purposeful, to build up and not tear down.

Bob Sparks keeps the “Reader’s Digest” article that Francis gave him as a new project manager. A single page is framed and sits on a shelf at home now that he is retired, a reminder of his mentor Francis. It reads, “A smile doesn’t cost anything and pays big dividends. Not even a dollar.” Words to manage people by, words to live one’s life by. That was Francis, always the exhorter and teacher.

He may have never read William Phelps’ pithy insight into the character of men but Francis Oneglia certainly exemplified it: “The final test of a gentleman is his respect for those who can be of no possible service to him.”

“He treated a guy off the street the same way he treated anyone who was influential,” says Sparks. And he was kind, especially to those who were in need. Like the day an elderly woman called O&G to say that the basement they had worked on was taking on some water after a heavy rain, and the foreman, as she recalled, had been Francis. When he heard the story from the office, he paid her a visit. It didn’t matter that the job was done 30 years ago. His heart went out to her and he had it taken care of.

Stories like these abound about Francis, too many to be told. And it is very likely that there are even more that were never recorded or recollected, except in the minds of those who had been blessed by knowing him.
A Lifetime of Leadership and Relationship:
(clockwise from top left) Francis, in his white hard hat, guiding an “old timers tour” of an O&G building job with former employees with whom he stayed in touch: from left, John Cellerino, Joe Franzi and Charlie Civelli; in uniform in 1945, back home after having been promoted to lieutenant on the battlefield; always an athlete, Francis took naturally to golf and loved it as much for playing alongside friends as for the game itself; back to work after the war, Francis (kneeling) with a road work crew he led in Colebrook; in 1956 Francis and cousin Joe Franzi (left), an O&G superintendent for many years, review plans for a major post-flood project to relocate a branch of the Naugatuck River
We remember

a letter from O&G President David Oneglia

It has been almost one year since an explosion at the Kleen Energy power plant site claimed the lives of six individuals and injured numerous others. This tragic accident has changed the lives of many who struggle to make sense of the sudden loss of a loved one, a close friend or a co-worker.

On February 7th, the one-year anniversary of the explosion, O&G will honor the fallen six with a special service at the site. In addition, we have established a bird watching sanctuary along the banks of the Connecticut River dedicated to these men to forever commemorate their contribution to the many lives they touched.

It is when faced with a tragedy that the resolve, talent and resources of a company and its people are put to the test. Now, with the vantage of time, we look back with appreciation and pride at our engineers, support staff and operations personnel whose dedication and perseverance was ably demonstrated under the most trying of circumstances. Through the efforts of hundreds of hard-working union men and women we now see a power plant that looks as it did in February and contains the same promise of energy for the region’s infrastructure.

We deeply appreciate the unwavering support from union leadership, as they spoke publicly of our dedication to safety, our contributions to the community and our focus on the health and wellbeing of our workers. Financial institutions with interests in our work have shown no hesitation in maintaining their backing of O&G, and additional support has come from political leaders and agency officials. It is rewarding for a company that values family and that is an integral part of the communities in which we live, work and conduct business to receive such a high level of support from those communities.

We are determined to tackle our obligations in a responsible manner – it has always been an O&G tradition to do so.

David M. Oneglia
President, O&G Industries
Time to Rebuild: One of Connecticut’s most heavily travelled bridges, the Moses Wheeler on I-95 needs reconstruction to continue safely supporting the 135,000 cars and trucks that cross it daily. Here crew begin the elaborate staging deck (under red crane) needed to build the foundations that will carry a new bridge.

O&G’s team at Moses Wheeler tackles technical challenges, adds to the contract scope and remains on target for completing this fast-track job as originally scheduled

As his gold pickup corners off the paved road into the dusty site and the staccato of the diesel winds down, he rasps above the engine noise, “As far as jobs go I’d rate this one at 9 out of 10. Definitely.”

That’s the opinion of veteran Project Superintendent Larry Doyon, a man who has worked on and managed his share of high-visibility, fast-paced highway projects across the state over some 40 years in the trenches. Project Manager Mike Daley concurs: “I’d have to give this job a nine-and-a-half. They don’t get much better than this.”

The two are referring in particular to the high level of teamwork, the technology and the outstanding safety record that together are taming “State Project No. 138-232,” better known as the Moses Wheeler Bridge Foundations Project.

Drilling Shafts Without Getting the Shaft
At $52.5M it is a large project, but not overwhelming in its scope. Highlights include the construction of a waste stockpile area where “controlled materials” (primarily contaminated soils and materials removed during excavation and drilling) can be safely held until being removed from the site. They also include the construction of temporary trestles in the Housatonic River. These “fingers” create expansive work platforms capable of supporting heavy equipment for this contract and the subsequent project when the piers and superstructure will be built.

The true challenge here for Daley and team is the job-crushing potential of the most challenging portion of this job, the drilling of 36, ten-foot-diameter shafts positioned mostly across the bed of the Housatonic River where the bridge’s pier foundations will be built. Making holes like these could transform an otherwise manageable project into a construction nightmare.

Daley has worked on difficult drilling projects before. From 1999 to 2001 he was assigned to one of O&G’s largest joint venture projects, working alongside a partner contractor to construct a 20-mile-long rail expressway connecting the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach to East Los Angeles. Two subcontractors with three drilling crews apiece executed
the work. “We drilled three-foot-diameter shafts every four feet, some of them 55 feet deep for ten miles, about 80 shafts a day for a little over a year,” recalls Daley. But here the shafts are considerably larger. At ten feet in diameter the holes are not much smaller than the center circle of a basketball court. And while there are 36 to drill compared to thousands, they are considerably more technically challenging than those O&G worked on in California.

Historically, drilling shafts has been an inexact science using methods and equipment that, though they have evolved, have not taken a game-changing leap forward. When using conventional methods unexpected site conditions – rock formations, for instance – can slow drilling to a crawl. Such twists of fate rocket up unrecoverable costs and string out schedule to unacceptable levels.

But O&G’s Heavy & Highway Estimating Department uncovered a resource across the country, with a proprietary rig developed half a world away in Japan, that is making all the difference.

**Hydraulic Clams, Reusable Modules and Bicycle Tubes**

Raito, Inc., is a California-based contractor highly specialized in stabilizing difficult construction sites. They possess a one-of-a-kind shaft drilling system, and are working with O&G on the project.

“They pretty much designed the system themselves and they’re the only one in the country with this type of drilling equipment. Because of their technology they can install these shafts with a very limited amount of risk to the project,” Daley says.

While shaft drilling comprises a significant but not commanding 30 percent of
Nudging a three-ton metal sheet suspended from a crane into an accurate position for a caisson wall to be built, against swift tidal river current using the pressure of a motorboat – it’s all in a day’s work for this crew (from left): Crane Operator Tom Mangan, Carpenter Foreman Mike Bougie, Carpenter Jason Hesse, and on the water, Boat Operator Derek Lang, Lifeguard Chris Bahner (O&G gold hard hat) and Carpenter James Giannetti (setting the pile).

In this contract, it is an especially critical 30 percent. Typically the risk in drilling comes when the drill head works its way down into unknown conditions and encounters obstructions. “Conventional drilling is a lot of hit or miss when you run into these issues,” says Daley. Raito’s innovative system that is being used at Moses Wheeler, however, replaces the auger and gravity scraping of conventional hole drilling with a much more predictable, and much more effective, hydraulically pressurized drilling system.

To make the shafts that will support the bridge piers, 30-foot-long hollow steel casings with small teeth at the end are rotated under massive pressure to drill down through the soil. As the drill goes deeper into the earth, additional casing sections are welded end on end, creating a long, hollow drilling shaft. A hydraulically powered “clam” pistons off the casing walls to continually clean the hole of the pulverized rock and water. When bedrock is hit, a diamond-tipped rotating bit, capable of drilling through virtually any rock type at any angle of presentation, descends to mill out the rock and sediment while water is pumped in to create a slurry of debris that is flushed up and out of the hole. Drilling proceeds until a solid, clean, three-meter-deep “socket” is made for the concrete to be poured.

Comparing the innovative hydraulic method used at Moses Wheeler side-by-side with conventional drilling, Daley estimates on average that the hydraulic method is three times faster. A ten-foot-diameter, conventionally drilled hole might take twenty or thirty days to complete; Raito and O&G are checking them off at an average rate of a shaft every eight to ten days.

Keeping water out of the shafts is a constant challenge. It is first kept at bay by a foundation seal that surrounds the work site beneath the river, which is continually dewatered by small pumps that expel the seepage. But then it needs to be kept away from the circular wall of the casing inside which the concrete for the foundations is poured. At Moses Wheeler it is done using a clever rubber membrane tube that Daley and Doyon developed.

“We looked at the thing and said, ‘How are we going to be able to seal this while the concrete cures?’ So we came up with the idea of the rubber membrane, like a bicycle inner tube. We thought if we could make one to slide over the metal casing and then inflate it to hold the seal in place and keep the water away from the new concrete and granite, that would do the trick,” says Daley. A vendor was found who could make the seal Daley and Doyon envisioned. The manufacturer produced a demo, they tested the seal and it worked beautifully.

Like most construction projects, and particularly this job which spans the width of the Housatonic River, a great deal of time and material goes first into staging the area before the actual work can proceed. And it is on this front that another sensible cost- and time-cutting methodology was proposed by the project team: creating an iron framework as the staging for shaft drilling that is largely modular and reusable.

Working off a connected series of plank-covered piers called “fingers” and deploying a massive 220-ton crane, Doyon’s crew bolts and welds these blocky units around the centers of each shaft site. After a shaft is completed the modular framework is unbolted or cut and lifted largely intact by crane to the next shaft drill site on the plans. “It just
“No one person or couple of people ever make a job successful. It’s a team effort from one end to the other. At the end we all take credit.”

SUPERINTENDENT LARRY DOYON

Safe and Secure: (top) Project Superintendent Larry Doyon and Raito Foreman Ricky Badal enjoy a lighthearted moment. Esprit de corps on the job is high. (below) Raito line managers and laborers gather on the deck for a “toolbox talk” to discuss safety and other matters relating to the job; at left is one of the ten-foot-diameter drill casings Raito uses in its unique hydraulic drilling system.

makes sense,” says Doyon, “because modular is reusable. We don’t want to take the whole thing apart. We pick it up in one shot and move it to the next spot.”

Safety and Cooperation

Doyon is pleased with the safety history of the project he supervises. “This has been a real safe job. We remind the guys and stay on top of things. We have our ‘toolbox talks’ every Thursday on different safety topics. And I always tell the guys if they have any problem with any equipment just ‘red tag’ it, pull it out of service and call me. ‘Never use anything that isn’t up to snuff!’ I tell them.”

And the cooperation around preempting potential safety issues has been noteworthy. When Doyon, for instance, had concerns about the hours and commute times a subcontractor was asking of his men, Daley, Doyon and the sub’s superintendent sat down together, shift plans were promptly reworked, the communication flowed down to the crews in the field and the project proceeded without a hitch. Most importantly the potential safety issue was eliminated.

Cooperation in general among all parties has been exemplary. Says Daley, “A key point here is that everybody’s input has made it go well, as has choosing the right people and subcontractors for the requirements of this job.”

Doyon and Daley, through their years logged on successful highway and bridge projects across the state, have come to develop productive working relationships with different ConnDOT inspectors and consultants. “They know what O&G is capable of accomplishing and how we take things seriously, so when we go to them with a request,” says Doyon, “they come up with the answers we need.” Ironing out work items right on the site benefits all parties.

Doyon is proud of the teamwork exemplified on the job. “We’re always looking for better, faster, safer ways to do things. We look ahead to the next job and maybe we can reuse an idea we develop here. It’s all due to everyone’s input, including the guys in the Main Office who bid this job. Some of these great ideas out here were theirs. That’s why I always say no one person or couple of people really ever make a job successful. It’s a team effort from one end to the other. At the end of the job we all take credit.”

Doyon grows confident in the future of O&G whenever he works alongside the young and upcoming line managers. It seems to inspire him. “There are an awful lot of good people in this company, quite a few young people in the ranks I’ve been around who are very good – Bobby Nardi, Robin Listorti, our engineers Kevin Voelker and Matt Egensteiner. People like that are the future of O&G and, I’ll tell you, they’re very good assets right now and are developing into great assets for O&G.”
Teamwork Fosters Innovation, Innovation Leads to Success

Take the four additional shafts that subcontractor Raito suggested be added to the scope of this project after their studies determined there would be no adverse impact to existing traffic-bearing piers as had originally been thought. “The way I saw it, based on their current shaft drilling methods it is was definitely worth the risk to take on the additional shafts at this point,” said Daley. So the proposal made its way from O&G to the DOT who agreed to it as it would put them that much farther ahead when the follow-on bridge superstructure contract is let. The net gain for the state will be one less phase in the next project, and one less subcontractor required.

As for schedule, the original completion date of September 2011 had been reduced by three months through hard work and intelligent management. Now with four more shafts added to the job, this $5M of extra work will extend the contract back out three months and end up putting the project back on track with the original completion date.

The Business of Drilling Shafts: (clockwise from top left) Framing for drill shaft supports that emphasizes modularity and reusability; precast concrete foundation seal with a metal containment structure; Raito’s Kalicson reverse circulation drill rig for drilling the socket into rock; massive drill collars and bit body for the drill rig; the hydraulic “clam” that pistons out loose material as holes are drilled; rebar awaiting concrete pour for a pier.

Team collects Globe Award

In a ceremony in Washington, D.C., O&G was recognized for its “contributions to environmental protection and mitigation” on the Route 7 Bypass Project in Brookfield with a Globe Award from the American Road and Transportation Builders Assoc. Transportation Development Foundation. Large projects from across the country were considered. Enviro-friendly design features cited in the award were walls to prevent turtles and snakes from entering the roadway, fencing and access channels to direct animals through safe corridors, phased construction to protect the needs of wildlife, fish ladders to create spawning areas, and the establishment of 32 acres of new wetlands, floodplain and upland forest habitat. The project wrapped up in November of 2009 on schedule despite the scope of work increasing by 20 percent. Representing the O&G team on-site are (left to right) Project Manager Mike Daley, Project Manager Kevin Mierzejewski, and Vice President John Gemetro.
“The Italian Job”

Villa-inspired lake house evokes Tuscan country elegance and a taste of la dolce vita

Creating a Taste of Tuscany: (clockwise from top left) Southbay Quartz walkway to the dock features an elaborate inlaid stone crest designed for the owner; seating; pergola on a raised circular platform, topped with a wineglass weathervane; seating area off outdoor kitchen; the back of the house facing Cedar Lake
So enamored were the Boscos of their repeated stays at Villa Bernardi in Tuscany that they decided to style their new lake house in Wolcott as closely after it as they could.

So Robert Bosco called on his builder, who called on his mason, who called on his landscape architect, who called on O&G – and an “A Team” was assembled.

The team refers to the project as “The Italian Job,” swiping the name of the 1960s British caper movie and its 2003 U.S. remake. Unlike the movie, no heist was made here, no one was hurt, no treachery was involved. But like its cinematic namesake, a crew of professionals, each with different skills and resources, was brought together to deftly pull off a stunning transformation in short order.

Chris LaRosa of Continental Builders was the general contractor on the job. “I’d have to say, looking back now, that the best part about this project was being a team. The whole inception and execution was a team effort.” It took just under 12 months from the razing of the 850 SF cottage that sat on the site for the last eighty or so years to the completion of every last detail, inside and out, of this compact but spectacular home.

Bonnie-Lee Simpson, sales consultant at the South Leonard Street Masonry Store and Showroom in Waterbury, worked closely with the Boscos and LaRosa, every week answering questions, researching materials and getting them just what they wanted.

Simpson and the project’s landscape architect, Beth Whitty, searched through O&G’s inventory for a stone that would match the look and texture of Villa Bernardi. “We had a ton of photos from the Boscos to go by,” says Whitty. “Unbelievably I stumbled upon a book that actually featured that very villa, so we knew exactly what we were after.”

Simpson recalls the early days when the project was starting. “When Beth and I began collaborating we left no stone unturned,” she puns with a grin. The pair scoured the stone yard and picked samples, arriving at a lighter stone called Southbay Quartz with variegated creams, golds and tans and a visually smooth though textured natural face. Brightness and warmth was what they were after.

Simpson and the Masonry Division saw to it that materials and fabrications were done just right and on time. And there was plenty packed into this half-acre property and 2100 SF house: St. Jean limestone for 400-plus linear feet of wall capping, as well as steps and pillar caps; some five tons of specially ordered Southbay boulders for walls, 480 SF of thin ashlar cut and six tons of ashlar Southbay stone, 23 tons of Southbay flagging stone for walkways, six tons of square and rectangular Southbay stone, six tons of pearl pebble stone, as well as stucco, granite benches and a large sandstone vase. Unique specialty
tiles and stone with names like basketweave honey onyx, verde uba tuba and keshi gold magica were painstakingly selected to finish the counters, floors and kitchen and bath surfaces.

Like every project, there were a few unexpected twists and turns. Simpson recalls a last-minute design change that demanded a quick resolution. “I had to reorder some pillar caps at the last minute. I called Jack Harding, the project manager at our fabrication facility in Beacon Falls. He asked how quickly I needed them and I said, ‘Yesterday Jack!’ The caps were ready the next morning. Every O&G employee knows the importance of timeliness – it’s our culture here.”

At project outset Simpson and her in-house team calculated lead times and established schedules. During the project when specs changed they remained flexible and responsive. “We don’t order core product, we keep it inventoried. We also cut and profile stone at our fabrication and distribution center, and this all makes it easier and faster for everyone involved,” says Simpson.

In addition to warehousing, templating and fabricating, O&G installed the outdoor kitchen countertop surfaces for the home’s *al fresco* dining patio.

Bosco was generous with budget but demanded perfection in return. “I wanted what I wanted and I got it. From my perspective everything was just perfect,” he says, and that from a self-confessed perfectionist. “Everything I talked about matching from Tuscany O&G either had or Beth and Bonnie-Lee found it and O&G got it. Like the limestone. My mason said we could do it, Beth found the stone at O&G, and it got done. With all the ideas floating around and changes to the plans, this project came out just phenomenally.”

Mason Mike Criscione recalls some of the challenges and the adaptations. “Everything about this little property was deceiving,” he says, particularly the slopes and pitches he and Beth Whitty dealt with. “We had to adjust our plans as we proceeded. What was on the print and what we ended up having to do was night and day.” La Rosa adds, “The plot had to lay out exactly right. We literally had one inch between the well and the septic field.”

As a general contractor LaRosa came to appreciate the ease of “one stop shopping” O&G provided him. “For instance, we started pouring concrete with someone the foundation guys used, but I saw the awesome service we were getting from O&G and Bonnie-Lee turned me on to the concrete plant. I don’t know how many yards of concrete we poured around here for the retaining walls and the steps around the lake, but I ordered everything from O&G. One source. They knew me by name at dispatch and I liked that kind of working relationship. The service was just phenomenal.”

When the wrought iron and canvas pergola finally took its place on the patio last July, its wine glass weathervane lazily drifting in the breeze off the water, the last major item on the villa’s punch list was completed. The Italian Job had been pulled off.

**Putting It All Together:** (from top) The 1930s cottage originally on the lakefront site; the “A Team” (left to right) comprises landscape architect Beth Whitty, Masonry Division sales consultant Bonnie-Lee Simpson, owner Robert Bosco, mason Mike Criscione, and general contractor Chris LaRosa; masons work on the patio and elevated pergola site; O&G’s Bart Baummer measures housings in the outdoor kitchen that will hold the *al fresco* kitchen’s appliances.
Situated harbor-side, with the Boston skyline low on the far northern horizon, the Thomas A. Watson Generating Station fits into a small footprint for a power plant – a mere two acres. But from this compact, super-efficient and state-of-the-art facility up to 116 megawatts of power will be available for meeting peak electricity demands in and around Braintree, Massachusetts.

The plant has been cited as one of America’s most modern and most efficient power producers and among the best in the world by trade magazine “Diesel & Gas Turbine Worldwide.” The team that designed and built this complex plant was also recognized with a Build New England Award for its outstanding development effort.

Winning project, winning team: The Thomas A. Watson Generating Station (left) came online in 2009 to support the Boston-area power grid during times of peak power demand. It has been cited as one of the country’s most efficient power producers and among the best in the world by trade magazine “Diesel & Gas Turbine Worldwide.” The team that designed and built this complex plant was also recognized with a Build New England Award for its outstanding development effort.

(above) On hand to receive the award were team member representatives (l to r) Gregory Oneglia, Vice Chairman of O&G Industries, Roger Lemos, Vice President of PB Power, William Bottiggi, General Manager and John-Erik Nelson, Principal Mechanical Engineer, both of Braintree Electric Light Department.
Its productive years gone by, O&G’s one-time sand and gravel site alongside the Naugatuck River in Beacon Falls has begun a second life as a recreational gem and wildlife habitat.

The site of the new Toby’s Pond and Recreation Park has colorful origins. Local history has it that a Native American simply named Toby, when freed from slavery in present-day Beacon Falls in 1688, became one of the state’s earliest adventurer-speculators. Saving diligently for the first five years of his freedom, Toby offered the Paugasuck Indians ten English pounds for a large, mostly mountainous tract of land. A barrel of cider was thrown in, the deal was struck and the land was later legally conferred to Toby by local government.

For Anita Goerig, the Masonry Division’s Director of Marketing, the dedication of the park was a particularly rewarding experience, both personally and professionally: Goerig not only spearheaded the event as its sole organizer but serves as Vice Chair of the Beacon Falls Conservation Commission. “I’m not a ‘tree hugger’ but I do value open space and champion preserving our natural resources – once they’re developed they are gone forever,” says Goerig. “We drove this point home during our ‘Community Forum, Celebrating Open Space’ in October of 2008 where keynote speaker Gina McCarthy, then Connecticut DEP Commissioner, spoke of the “No Child Left Inside” program. We announced the impending land transfer to the town from O&G during the event. Seeing it all unfold as the community came together was very gratifying for me.”

It was an event that was actually a long time in the making: the permitting process, at local, state and federal levels, took an arduous 15 years to negotiate and secure. Once all permits were in hand, preparatory site work took another two years to complete and included such tasks as dike repair and armoring, making an inlet from and outlet to the Naugatuck.
A New Gem for the Community Is Unveiled: O&G’s former sand and gravel extraction site in Beacon Falls was transformed by the company and repurposed as Toby’s Pond and Recreation Park before being deeded to the town of Beacon Falls. (left) Coast Guard Auxiliary Public Affairs Officer Ken Jacobs attended the opening ceremony and explained boating safety to visitors young and old; (top) leaders in attendance included First Selectman Susan Cable (speaking), then State Comptroller and now Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman, State Senator Joseph Crisco and former State Representative Theresa Conroy; (bottom) local well wishers attend the opening dedication.

River, building a boat launch, developing a wildlife habitat area with a walking trail with footbridges, enlarging the pond footprint and reclaiming areas with seeding and mulching.

Ken Faroni is O&G’s Director of Planning and Permits. He was closely involved with long-term planning and zoning for the site. “It was agreed that following the excavation of the material the only uses permitted would be water-based recreation and open space. We had built into the zoning the concept of deeding the land to Beacon Falls and adopting a formal agreement as part of the approval process. It was a win-win situation for O&G and the town,” says Faroni.

“The zoning that was proposed and adopted by the town assured that the site would permanently remain as public open space for canoeing, kayaking, fishing and hiking, while it offered wildlife protection and floodplain management,” says Faroni. “The town knew upfront what they would be getting and what our obligations would be with respect to flood control. The agreement also required that we pay a royalty to the town for the volume of material extracted that would be earmarked exclusively for future recreational maintenance purposes at this site.”

Attending the ceremony were political leaders Nancy Wyman, Comptroller of the State, State Senator Joseph Crisco and State Representative Theresa Conroy. Also attending the event was the town’s First Selectman, Susan Cable. “The park is a beautiful asset,” says an enthusiastic and appreciative Cable, “and it is going to benefit our community enormously down the road. We’re very pleased and excited about it. The partnership between O&G and Beacon Falls is an absolute plus for the town.”

On hand was a small flotilla of canoeists and kayakers that had been organized by area outfitter Dave Faber and who were equally excited with the new paddling venue. The Naugatuck River, to which the recreation area is immediately adjacent, “has been coming back full circle,” as Faber puts it, to a clean and useable aquatic resource. “Adding this paddling area is another nice part of that restoration,” he says. “The ramps make this so much more accessible for older folks and folks with disabilities. I applaud O&G. I wish more companies would do what they did.”

Kenneth Jacobs, a Public Affairs Officer with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, gladly took part in the event by offering boat inspections to all participants. All paddle boaters took the time to have their canoes and kayaks inspected and Jacobs awarded each a Vessel Safety Check decal from the Coast Guard. Says Jacobs, “We thank O&G for their contribution to the community. This park offers people safe parking and easy access to a calm insertion point. The calm waters here have the potential to serve as a training ground for safe boating practices while affording easy access to the more challenging currents of the Naugatuck River.”
Minted in the fall of 2007 under the direction of Dan Carey, Associate Counsel and Director of Human Resources, iHealth has seen steady growth in participants coming aboard. “In 2007 there was a core group from the main office who rolled out the program,” says Carey, “but since that time not only has participation from our various office and store locations increased but iHealth participation from the field locations has grown as well.”

At some of the company’s job sites enthusiastic employees have even launched their own good-spirited health initiatives. For instance, at the Kleen Energy project in Middletown, organizers, with a nod to the popular TV program of the same name, put together a “Biggest Loser” competition with impressive results. The top three “biggest losers,” as a percentage of body weight, shed some impressive poundage: Denayr Gant dropped 13.5%, Chris McPadden 11.5% and Chris Rizy 9.5%.

News of their contest spread to the rest of the company and over ten weeks 11 teams – sporting clever names like Rawson’s Fat Five (the contest’s champions at 6.7%), Number Cruncher$, Half-Weigh House and Weight Whittlers – lost a grand total of 463 pounds, nearly a quarter-ton of excess pounds.

The iHealth Rewards (the program’s complete title) actually comprises two components. The first is a contribution discount program that rewards employees with a hefty discount in their insurance contribution if once a year they have their personal health statistics checked, including cholesterol and glucose levels, blood pressure and body mass index. Says Carey, “The catch phrase we use is ‘Know your numbers and get the discount!’ for this important first step in health awareness.”

But it is the second component, the focus on healthy living and lifestyles, that really drives the effort. It is what most people think of when they hear “iHealth.” The healthy living component concerns itself with helping people control the most predominant risk factors to a long and healthy life, things like height-to-weight ratio, blood pressure, triglycerides (a type of blood-borne fat), “good” and “bad” cholesterol levels, and blood sugar.

Carey says that the hard, trackable numbers on health have improved. “The overall cardiovascular risk factor improved by 11% between 2008 and 2009. We have healthier employees at O&G as a direct result of the program, a fact about which all of the employee committee members and program participants can be very proud.”

Ongoing direction of iHealth comes through a ten-person Wellness Committee that brainstorms improvements and activities, reviews program progress and drives participation throughout the company. Barbara Weingart, on the committee since its inception, serves as its coordinator and the editor of the iHealth inhouse newsletter. She has become what Carey, with obvious satisfaction and affection, labels an “iHealth zealot.”

“The committee gets employees together over lunch about once a month – we call it ‘lunch and learn’ – to hear guest speakers address topics that will help us all stay healthy,” says Weingart.

Presentations have included a personal trainer explaining safe and effective exercise regimes, a health food expert explaining popular health foods and supplements, a nutritionist talking about diabetes risk factors, and an oncology case manager from a local hospital with the latest information on cancer and cardiac symptoms and treatments.

Going forward Carey sees iHealth expanding in the creation of programs for field personnel. O&G’s numerous projects around the region function like small companies unto themselves. “Getting these groups inspired and engaged will require tailored approaches. There is also a growing partnership with an area benefits provider who specializes in wellness programs like iHealth and who will be multiplying the current resources available to us,” Carey says.

Judging by its “vitals” one would have to say iHealth is cruising through its fourth year very healthy indeed.

**Just How Healthy is iHealth?**

Its purpose is simple: helping O&G employees and their families live healthier, happier lives. But just how healthy is the company’s employee-directed, totally volunteer iHealth health and wellness program, now in its fourth year?

13.5% Percent body weight shed by O&G’s “Biggest Loser” Denayr Grant

463 Total pounds lost by participants in “Biggest Loser” competition

6.7% Percent average body weight lost by contest winners Rawson’s Fat Five

11% Improvement in overall cardiac risk factor between 2008 and 2009

**You in yet?**

It’s a fact that employees who participate in their company’s health and wellness programs, with the motivation and camaraderie of their peers, benefit from:

- greater ability to focus and complete projects
- more energy even after work
- better sleep at night
- reduced stress and reduced muscle strain
- lower weight, cholesterol and blood pressure

Join in and boost your health!
“We’re taking the initiative to ‘go green’ with our heavy equipment,” says Jimmy Zambero, Vice President and head of vehicle maintenance for O&G. Zambero is enthusiastic about the grant money he’s been obtaining through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act – it’s money specifically set aside to bring construction equipment into compliance with clean air mandates specified by the EPA.

Due to its participation in the ARRA-funded Merritt Parkway project, O&G is eligible to apply for the grants which help cover the purchase and installation of diesel oxidation catalysts (DOCs) on heavy off-road equipment by Zambero and his crew. To qualify for the grants the DOCs had to be verified non-road retrofit technology and inspected after installation.

The beneficiaries of reduced diesel engine emissions around construction sites will be residents in the area, particularly the young, the elderly and those with breathing conditions, as well as those working at the site.

That is the current initiative, but it is not the first. Lowering vehicle emissions has actually been high on O&G’s agenda since 2003 when the company began installing DOCs on its heavy construction equipment, one of the few firms in the state to voluntarily undertake such an effort. Zambero says that over 60 DOC units have been installed since that date. It was in response to a mandate by the State that required contractors working on projects in the I-95 New Haven corridor to upgrade the exhaust systems of their vehicles. The corridor is what the EPA deems a “severe non-attainment area” of the state where airborne pollutants significantly exceed federal air quality standards.

“Any equipment at job sites in the New Haven corridor over 60 horse power and on the job 30 days or longer needed to be retrofitted with a DOC,”
Retrofitted: Mechanic Joe Muckle, Jr., makes a few final adjustments to a DOC – diesel oxidation catalyst – adapted to the exhaust system of an excavator at O&G's South Main Repair Facility

says Zambero. “The state was happy that when we arrived to start work we had already retrofitted all of our equipment with DOCs. We didn’t wait the thirty days’ grace period, we started work in full compliance with the regulations.”

In a companion proactive environmental effort O&G has also invested in emissions testing equipment for its over-the-road trucks, purchasing advanced testing units for the South Main and Southbury facilities. “We’re able to perform and certify our own testing when we bring our trucks in for their annual inspections,” says Zambero. “That takes a load off the state – they have only two inspection teams on the road.” Test results are output on a computer and sent directly to the DOT for their records. The state supplies inspection stickers for all trucks that pass. “When our drivers pass an emissions checkpoint the inspectors see the stickers and they wave us through. It’s good for them and it’s good for us,” says Zambero.

Zambero says that the company plans to purchase additional testing units for both its Bridgeport and Stamford garages. Company-wide the Southbury and Torrington inspection stations tested some 170 trucks in 2009 and approximately the same number in 2010. Going further down the green road, Zambero’s office is working on obtaining additional grant monies from the State to retrofit vehicles with the more technically involved diesel particulate filters, or DPFs.

“We’ve taken the ‘green initiative’ with our fleet,” says Zambero, “and it’s proving a ‘win’ for the environment and for everyone involved.”
It was penned onto his last time card: “Hope everybody there has as good a career as I had. Best of luck, Doug.” That’s how DOUGLAS ALLYN left O&G, with the same positive and often selfless attitude that had seen him through 30 years as a mechanic in the Southbury facility. Those 30 years passed quickly for Doug, even though his work as a “road” or “outside” mechanic, repairing heavy equipment regardless of weather and location, could be some of the most physically demanding anywhere in the company. “Sure, it was wonderful when the sun was shining. Everyone wants to go then. But you get subzero temps and ice and snow – nobody’s begging to go,” he says. He began as a Mack truck mechanic and ran the garage’s wrecker. That’s when he met George Howe who took a shine to Allyn and brought him aboard in 1980. “I watched the guys I call ‘the legends’ retire: Sonny Savanella, Gene McKeon, Ed Richards, Bob Jones. Then finally my day came.” Doug decided it was time to give up the wrenches when he realized he had fewer financial obligations than some of the younger mechanics who had children still at home and mortgages to meet. So he left to make more room. He keeps busy these days, every day, working on equipment for friends and family. He also keeps his collection of vintage heavy equipment in good repair, despite his wife “getting excited” when he would acquire a new truck or loader. “She got over it every time,” he wryly observes. Happily married to Cathy for 33 years, he’s says, “She’s as good as gold.” Sounds like you have it all figured out, Doug!

LESTER KLIMASZEWSKI was a supervisor for the last 40 years of his career, pretty much always working with concrete. With a penchant for perfection, it is probably the critical “foundational” nature of concrete that captivated Lester’s interest and kept him “true to form.” When setting elaborate foundations, he says, “You got to get it perfect – you got to get a honeymoon fit – because if you get it wrong in the foundation you got a problem all the way to the roof.” He dissected every set of plans he received, hunting for any and every mistake or potential issue that could bite him later before he would begin work. Another Lester-ism – “do it once and do it right” – stood him in good stead right to the end of his years at O&G when he directed the installation of the company’s stone processing plant in New Milford. The vendor who manufactured and installed all the special-ized equipment there said in his 30 years of installations he had never seen a job so accurately prepared. A Polish emigre who landed in the States in 1966, young Lester met and married Stasia, who also came from Poland, and raised a family. In April he took Stasia with their two married children and their families to the Dominican Republic for the couple’s 40th anniversary. “Today I’m still in good shape. I’m very active in sports. I make circles around the young guys,” he chuckles. “Every time I see an O&G project or equipment O&G is always in my heart.” Thank you, Lester, for your many years of giving 110%.

The product of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, with an affable demeanor and a bit of a drawl, DON “TRACY” LADD was responsible for applying his years of corporate safety work to shape and codify O&G’s safety program as the company’s first official safety director. “Most jobs you work, things get done, you’re successful. When I’m successful it’s because nothing happens. It’s hard to measure my success by what didn’t happen!” he says, pointing out the irony of the role of a safety director. He did feel the most satisfaction when men in the field would give him a call for some advice and help on a job site – it meant his message of proactive jobsite safety was working itself into the culture of the company. Today it’s solidly there. When he retired as Director of Safety he immediately relocated back to the brick home he had built in Baton Rouge. (He also spent the first 20 years of his career there in the Athletic Department of Louisiana State University, ending up the Tiger’s Director of Sports Medicine.) Today, with Emily, his wife of 47 years, Tracy divides his days between relaxing, fine dining, entertaining family – his two grown children and their families also relocated back to Baton Rouge – and exploring all the local destinations he’d never taken the time to see before. “You live in a big city and you never go do the things that the tourists do. So now we’re enjoying just that. We tour New Orleans and the surrounding area, and it seems like we never eat in the same restaurant twice,” he says. Keep on enjoying the good life, Tracy – laissez le bon temps rouler!

“You know, I retired but I didn’t like staying home, so I went back,” says WALTER PULICA of his “two-term” employment with O&G. Hired in 1987 by George Hove as a maintenance man when he was well into his 50s, Walt worked at the South Main repair facility until he was 68 years old and retired in 1994, returning in 1997 and working until 2009. Joining a small host of Pulicas and other relatives in the company, he relished his new job and the people there. They were so much better than his years of drudgery in local factories where the future was always uncertain. “At one time I worked on a machine buffing needles to support my family. It was a hard, hard job,” he says; by contrast Walt found his years at O&G cleaning and on occasion delivering parts interesting. He was down to a $39-a-week job at a grocery store when George Howe noticed how well Walt kept the shopping carts and their area cleaned and tidy. Howe introduced himself, offered a job to the incredulous Pulica who thought he had to be too old, and a week later he found himself with steady employment. Widowed in 2000 (though he spends time with an unnamed lady friend) 65-year-old Walt is still itching to get out of the house and contribute: “Could you maybe see if they have a little job for me at the Main Office?” he asks. We admire your spunk, Walt! Our best to you.

It’s a nickname his grandfather gave him as a young boy, and it stuck, apparently forever. “PANKY” THOMPSON is convinced nobody would recognize him by his given name, Francis Thompson, Jr., including the dispatchers and drivers he rubbed elbows with for 14 years at O&G as a triaxle driver working out of Bridgeport. “I never went to work,” Panky laughs now, “and I got paid for it. I really loved it. As a kid I saw big trucks and wanted to drive; I started driving for a friend when I got my license, he got me into working for bigger companies and the next thing you know I’m retired.” His time with O&G was a career highlight, with good trucks and bosses, foremen and dispatchers he enjoyed: “I don’t have a bad word to say about those years.” Panky remembers the time he delivered asphalt to Judge Judy’s Greenwich estate (“What a shack she had!”), and the brief celebrity of being chosen “Mr. June 2010” for the Teamsters’ calendar, posing with his O&G truck. In May he bought a black ’32 Ford street rod and spends time taking it to local cruise events. Since retiring Panky and his wife, Lori, took a two-week Alaskan trip to celebrate his retirement and their 25th wedding anniversary, and afterwards toured the Grand Canyon and spent some time playing in Las Vegas. “I’m retired but Lori still works – guess she’d better!” he quips. Keep on truckin’, Panky!
Sikorsky Aircraft Transmission Test Facility
Stratford, CT

Sikorsky is proceeding with the development of the CH-53K, its largest helicopter to-date. The aircraft features a 36,000 pound lift capacity and is designed specifically to serve the U.S. Marines Corps. Under this contract a single-story, 12,000 SF facility to test the helicopter’s transmission components is being constructed. O&G is responsible for the facility’s shell as well as HVAC, plumbing and electrical service. Three test stands will be installed to accommodate the different gearboxes that constitute the aircraft’s drive system. The test stands will be “mechanically regenerative” so that the power consumed to operate them will be significantly less than the power applied to test the gearboxes. This project continues a series of projects at the aircraft manufacturer, including the successful completion of a CH-53K simulation lab for the early design and development of this particular aircraft. Sikorsky’s Project Engineer is Robert Bonitz and its Facilities Project Manager is George Kochera. O&G’s Project Manager is Steve Torres and Project Engineer is Robert Green. Work began in early November 2010 and is scheduled for completion in late March 2011.

Quinnipiac University Student Center
Hamden, CT

Quinnipiac University has awarded O&G a $6M general construction contract for the expansion and renovation of its Mount Carmel Campus Student Center. The project will consist of approximately 5400 SF of new construction, including a new second floor in the footprint of the existing Alumni Hall. This work will require precise structural demolition and complex upgrades to the existing steel frame and foundation. The renovation area, at approximately 23,000 SF, will include new mechanical and electrical systems and new finishes throughout. This latest effort builds upon a series of other construction and renovation projects at the university for dormitory, recreational and parking space beginning in 2007. Construction is scheduled to begin in January 2011 and be completed by January 2012. The architect for this project is Centerbrook Architects and Planners; Quinnipiac University is represented by The Pegasus Group.

NEW TAFT DINING HALL REMAINS “HEART OF THE SCHOOL”

It was a project decades in the planning. Beginning in the late 1970s the Trustees of The Taft School began formulating their vision for a new dining hall that would carry on school tradition of the hall as the heart of the campus. The project, completed at the end of September 2010, involved the phased demolition of the existing dining hall and the construction of a 24,000 SF, $27M addition to take its place. The comprehensive transformation meets numerous critical needs: a modernized dining facility capable of seating the entire student body at dinner; a new servery, refurbishment of the lobby, the relocation of a loading dock, a pedestrian-only quadrangle, ADA-compliant bathrooms and entrances, code updates to student living spaces above the hall, and renovation of the old headmaster’s quarters – all of it an architectural compliment to the Taft campus. The dining hall is the latest in a string of successful development projects for Taft dating back to 1989 that have included a dormitory, hockey arena, athletic fields, a field house addition, a new science and mathematics center and the Hubert Taft, Jr., Library.

O&G INDUSTRIES | A COMPANY ON THE GO | WINTER 2011