Free-thinking Ralph Waldo Emerson once observed, “To be great is to be misunderstood.” Being great – being known for what you excel at – can carry with it an unfortunate flip side: the world might never know that you do other things with equal excellence, and instead pigeon hole you as a one-trick wonder.

Over the last few years the Building Division encountered again and again the misconception that it only developed large-scale, multi-million-dollar projects. They found that some otherwise potential clients believed O&G was solely a large road building and excavation company. These faulty notions galvanized the division into action to dispel that thinking.

The Special Projects Group solution

Jason Travelstead, Vice President of Operations for the Building Division, was acutely aware of the dilemma. “We’re known for our work on large projects. It seemed that no one understood that O&G was actually interested in and structured to execute smaller projects.”

At strategic planning sessions over the summer of 2010, increasing the focus on small projects was deemed important enough to formalize an actual department. O&G’s performance on the relatively few small projects it had executed was exemplary. O&G’s performance had, in fact, already led the company to be shortlisted on several bidder’s lists in the region. It was time to capitalize on this capability.

“The push was on to get the word out that we were in the market for any project under $10 million, and as small as a fraction of that. Papers and trade magazines cover some of the larger projects we work on, but the smaller ones we do are below the radar. Nobody knows,” says Aaron Mednick, Vice President of the Building Division.
The Special Projects Group was rolled out in January of 2011. It is a band of multi-talented managers and tradesmen selected to service the market for smaller-scale construction projects with their unique need for speed and flexibility. To work in the group, says John Humes, “You can’t be a one-trick pony – you’ve got to be good at a number of trades.”

Humes is a Senior Estimator and the sole estimator assigned to Special Projects. He has been around construction all his working life, starting with a home builder and a site contractor back in high school. At O&G he began in pre-construction, spent some years in the company’s closely related Industrial Accounts Department (see sidebar), served as project manager for concrete work at Merritt Towers, and worked preparing building estimates for six years before being tasked with helping launch Special Projects. “I’m a senior estimator – slash – project manager – slash – marketing guy – slash...,” he says with a smile.

True to the nature of special projects, workers in the group must wear, comfortably, many different hats. It’s what defines the Group, gives it its character and makes life interesting. “You’re not a specialist but a generalist. You’re able to shift gears quickly and you’re good with people – you have to be because virtually every job we do is in the middle of an operating organization,” says Damon Cooke.

Like Humes, Damon Cooke, the Group’s project manager, can’t recall doing any work if not around a job site. “I’ve always been in construction. I don’t know anything else.” The son of an engineer, Cooke came to O&G from another Connecticut firm. Before being assigned to the new group he ran O&G’s work at two private schools, building a hockey arena at one and a science center at the other.

Jason Travelstead oversees Special Projects. Since 1998 Travelstead has worked in the Building Division on numerous large projects. With large-scale construction as his frame of reference, he appreciates what small-scale project support is all about. “In terms of process, it isn’t significantly different per se from working on large projects. The real difference is that we look to create a special connection with our clients so we can understand their needs.” It is a fine distinction, and an essential ingredient in the Special Projects Group – client mix. “I give John and Damon a lot of credit,” says Travelstead. “They’re client-focused and our customers see it.”

While Humes, Cooke and Travelstead manage it all day to day, they receive an assist from Building Division Vice President Aaron Mednick, and from Vice President and General Superintendent Leo Nardi who allocates men and materials across the corporation.

In the field, projects have been led by some of the company’s most experienced, adaptable and personable foremen and project managers: Scott Rouleau, Frank Scalo, Joe Farkash, Ron Richnasky, Dave Olsen, Jim Nardi, Kerri Caparulo, Bill Noll and Mark Jeffco. (Like several of the other project managers, Jeffco began his particular relationship with a client on a large-scale building project and has since transitioned into the ongoing service mode – being “on call,” as it were – for rapid estimates and quick projects that pop up at that same client’s.)

**Management will walk through our jobs, sometimes twice a week. That says a lot. It’s not the size of the job, it’s the O&G name on it.**

**JOHN HUMES**
**SPECIAL PROJECTS SENIOR ESTIMATOR**

Precendent and promotion

The precedent for Special Projects is the Building Division’s Industrial Accounts Department, formed in the 1980s and, since 1998, doing a low-key but lively business under the direction of Department Manager Steve Torres. Manufacturers who sometimes stumbled upon the fact that O&G did vertical construction and not “just built roads and poured concrete,” would give Torres and company an opportunity to show what they could do on a single small project. Almost without exception, that job would lead to more work, larger projects and long-term relationships.

Such is the confidence that Torres has in the “business within a business” small project model that he yearns for permission to do one thing when introduced to a potential client: “Just let us get in and show you what we can do for you.”

It is the same model the Special Projects Group is plugging into, and it is a model that brings results. In its first 13 months of operation, there have been 24 jobs contracted for a round-figure total of $9M.

**Firearms to catheters, basements to garages – making happy clients**

While the Industrial Accounts Department, as its name suggests, serves the construction needs of manufacturers, the Special Projects Group has a bigger tent. It courts clientele from health care, schools and universities, pharmaceuticals, commerce and government, with the occasional light industrial project added to the mix.

“Our people consistently perform with excellence,” says Travelstead. “We receive some great feedback on the value and the quality of workmanship we deliver. There is no doubt about it – our clients are happy with what we do for them.”

Take one of Cooke’s projects this past summer, one in a series of ongoing jobs for the client. Initially Cooke had established O&G’s trustworthiness with the client’s new facilities manager after helping him sort out some difficulties on a project. He had been called in to help because, going a step further back, the manager knew Cooke when O&G built a new hockey rink. He became the trusted, problem-solving, “go-to” guy because O&G had done what it set out to do, when it agreed to, for the price that had been set.

For the summer job, chronically wet basements were the issue. Not a large job, but an important one and one with its share of twists and turns perfectly suited to Special Projects.

“We had to excavate a courtyard between two buildings so it was tight, and there were a lot of utilities,” says Cooke. Faulty waterproofing had to be scraped off and new applied correctly. Everything that had been dug up was replaced “as if we were never there,” he says. “I’d never done anything like that. It was pretty unusual and difficult work. A lot had to do with the shoring system and exposing 15 feet of foundation. But we took off the masonry in sections, waterproofed up into the masonry and reinstalled it.”

The water issue was solved, the area looked even better than before, the customer was delighted. And it led to what the Group considers an ultimate outcome: becoming an on-call contractor and securing ongoing, follow-up projects.

Or take the work done for a firearms manufacturer who needed existing factory space reworked. The facilities people took O&G’s bid and gave Special Projects a shot to see how they would handle it. “It was the pair of old foundations beneath the space that had to be removed, an issue given the very tight work spaces. Other firms had gotten the job done on similar spaces but only by expending a great deal of time and effort.

Humes describes the first day of work there. “After an hour or two of hammering at the foundation with a small machine, our foreman, Joe Farkash, requested a ‘318’ for the job.” A Model 318 backhoe has more demolition power and rubber tires that he calculated would help it squeeze into the space with the right operator behind the controls. “Our guy walked it up and over things to get into position. Everything just barely fit. He had to keep the arm extended or it would hit the ceiling. The customer was impressed with how we demolished the foundations without adding significant time or manpower. We took a proactive stance, got the right men and machines there and kept the job moving.”

Challenges solved, time saved, client happy, and O&G now on a very small list of preferred contractors.

“We’ve used O&G on several projects here and my impression is a ten out of ten,” says Jeff East, a transplanted Southerner and Director of

O&G INDUSTRIES | A COMPANY ON THE GO | WINTER 2012
Since 1998 when he assumed its leadership from the late Gene Sternberg, Steve Torres has managed the Industrial Accounts Department, a specialized business unit within the Building Division. Largely autonomous and definitely niche-focused, its specialty is being "everything construction" to an established manufacturing clientele.

"We do a lot of the unique projects nobody likes to do," he says. Like heavy machine foundations recently completed as part of one of the largest jobs this small projects driven group has performed at $7M. "We do everything for a client: we can do a $2,000 job on up to a $7M job." And for the times when a project arises at a client's with a larger scope, O&G's Building Division stands ready to take it on and ensure delivery of services.

Establishing a relationship with a client begins with developing trust. That's how Torres approaches potential industrial clients. He knows that his department thrives on repeat business from satisfied customers, so he is eager to get his crews in to show what they can do.

It's the approach Torres has taken just recently with a international pharmaceutical manufacturer he has been soliciting. "I told my contact there, 'Just give us a small job. I want to show you what we can do." Plain spoken and direct – the way he manages his projects and people – Torres' entreaty hit the mark. As has happened many times in the 14 years he has managed the department, the manufacturer was persuaded and the beginning of another enduring, mutually beneficial partnership looks set to begin.

Torres recognizes that one of his strengths is the ability to truly self-perform projects. Where others lay claim to providing all services, O&G actually does. It gives peace of mind to a client. "We have our own workforce. We control our own destiny with concrete, mason supplies, asphalt, quarries. When I go to a customer and tell them what we can self perform, we do, which is not true for some other companies who sub out a lot of the work." As Torres puts it, "Our clients have a good confidence level that we're going to get in and get out."

A few of the Department's customers who have seen just how well this band of building brothers performs time after time push at the outer edges of the delivery envelope. "We keep pulling the rabbit out of the hat for them. We keep doing it and doing it." But on occasion Torres, always the realist, needs to rein the expectations back into the realm of the realistic. "Sometimes I'll have to say, 'Guys, this can't be done in that way. I don't want to tell you it can and four months down the road we're all in a panic because I agreed to it, knowing that we couldn't deliver.' I'm never going to put us in that position," he says.

That type of honest, plain speaking bears the fruit of appreciation. Clients respect him: they know Torres will drive himself and his crews hard, and his crews will respond admirably, but that he will not risk his or their reputation on the impossible. "In this type of small business you live off your reputation."

Torres has three trusted right-hand men in the field, supervising the Department's work. Steve Walker, Brad Otis and Jim Perazzella oversee production at several of the Department's largest clients and at the other smaller projects that come online. Rob Green is a project engineer and Torres' protegee whom he is "breaking in" to assume his position in the next decade. That's the way Torres himself arrived at his current position, having learned under Gene Sternberg for twelve years before Gene retired and passed the controls to Torres. It seems to be a good way to go.
For its performance O&G received kudos from the project architect as well as the hospital’s director of facilities management who praised project manager Dave Olsen for “going out of his way to coordinate construction activities during active hospital operations.” O&G maintained infection control protocols and was commended by the hospital’s infection control team: “The team also went out of their way to maintain full communication with my department and responded to issues quickly.” Even the staff of the cath lab was pleased. Supervisor JoAna Casey said that Humes, Olsen and crew “answered every question, addressed every concern, were considerate of our patients and were all around very professional.”

Dialing in the right lean mix

Lean, multidisciplinary crews are essential to optimal control of cost, schedule and quality.

Those crews come together at the direction of one man, Leo Nardi, O&G’s general superintendent. Nardi is a hub, apportioning crews and equipment across the company’s projects around the region. As reports filter back, and months and years pass, he builds a solid command of his human and mechanical arsenal: who does what the best, what equipment works the best and where.

He is always focused on getting the mix correct but especially so for nimble, small projects. Nardi finds that, proportionally, these smaller jobs consume more of his time. Allocation here is a finer art. He looks for “multi-taskers” who have demonstrated their skill at multiple trades. Where a large job needs a carpenter who is a great framer, for instance, a small job needs someone who can do framing and then switch gears to sheetrocking and finish carpentry, and switch again to painting. Or an operator who is skilled on multiple machines, not just one.

There are times where the Group seeks Nardi’s insight when they prepare their bid, seeing that a job poses unusual challenges. “Looking at the specs with John or Damon or Jason we’ll talk it through and I’ll assign the most capable personnel for that particular job, guys with the most diverse capability, and get the most versatile equipment to the site at the proper time,” he says.

Expert, diverse capability

From adding a handicap ramp, to building a catheterization lab in the middle of a fully operating hospital, to fast-tracking a three-story parking garage and ramp at a police station, designed by JP Engineering/Richard Marnicki, Special Projects meets the need for expert workmanship and project management on a smaller scale.
At the end of the day, though it is rarely needed, O&G brings another significant advantage to small project clients: the tremendous reserve of expertise and horsepower that stands ready to be called into action to “knock out” a job should the need ever arise.

“I cannot tell you how important it is.”

In the up-close-and-very-personal world of small projects, building relationships with clients is a critical matter. “It is huge,” says Cooke emphatically. “I cannot tell you how important it is.” He thinks back to 2005 when he helped his contact at a customer’s, a new hire, resolve a raft of open issues he had with a consultant with whom he had lost trust. And later, as the project was closing, Cooke again went out of his way to assist with a punchlist to move the job to a successful conclusion. Helping his client get “unstuck” cemented a working relationship that continues to this day.

Humes echoes the sentiment: “Relationships are everything.” He, too, can tell stories of resolving issues, restoring trust and creating relationships.

Ask them and Special Projects managers can rattle off just what it is their clients need. They think about their clients a lot. It drives their decisions. Meeting these needs has led, and will continue to lead, to more work for the Group. People tell us what they need. It drives their communication, cooperation – all play into their preferences.

“I can tell you exactly what they want,” says Humes, with Cooke concurring. “They want you to trust you and know you are reliable. They want you to be responsive – when they call they want a call back the same day. They want their quality. They hear O&G delivers it on large projects, they want the same quality here. I tell them it’s our brand, it’s who we are and to expect it. They rely on our integrity. Some of our clients have a great deal of knowledge, others are learning. They all expect us to deal with them fairly. Giving them peace of mind is huge.”

Foreman Jim Nardi, whose small project work has all been done for the same university client, attests to the importance of trust in developing working relationships. He has seen an unbroken increase in the number of discrete projects for one client, including six simultaneous jobs in two months of last summer, because of the trust level O&G has earned. Timeliness, quality of workmanship, ease of communication, cooperation – all play into trust. “They like what we’re doing,” he says, “they trust us, and they talk about us. We get a lot of our new work because of word of mouth. But to me, it all comes down to being trustworthy and honest.”

Designers and architects, too, appreciate the level of comfort they get working alongside Special Projects. They know that their designs are not going to get butchered; to the contrary, they expect that they will be executed “spot on,” down to the smallest detail. Relationship once again is key. Designers are often called into a client’s offices before the Special Projects Group. “We focus on earning trust so designers say to the client, totally unprompted, ‘I’ve worked with O&G and you need to have them in on this project, they’d be really good here’,” says Cooke.

While the managers cannot be there every day, the foremen and their crews are at the sites day in and day out. Which is why, in addition to their trade skills, the intangible people skills factor is added into the equation when workmen are assigned. The Group requests that only “people people” work their projects.

Special Projects lives and dies by its ability to excel as a team. From Travelstead, Humes and Cooke handling the contracts to Nardi allocating resources to the foremen and the tradesmen who congregate with the customer’s people – who are the face of O&G on the job – the singular importance of each project is communicated. Clients know that their job is the immediate focus of the crew. Says Humes, “When the owner feels that you are working solely for them to give them the best possible result, they are going to be glad to have you back. They’ll even figure out ways to get you in to do more work.”

The Group has been approached by owners who hope the Group could help at their more remote locations where fast-track small projects are queued up waiting to be tackled. That’s where the long reach and the depth of talent that comes from being a regional construction firm meets these additional needs.

Into the future

Once in and proven, the goal for Travelstead and company is to build the level of trust that comes from delivering consistently, and migrate to the short list of bidders or, ultimately, become the go-to provider. “We hope to leverage these projects into long-term relationships,” he says, as clients understand that O&G can provide construction services no matter how small or large the project.

Travelstead is justly confident. He looks to at least double the client base built over the first year of operation. Additional service areas under consideration, such as handling firms’ building and grounds maintenance, would diversify the Group. “This is a business area that can really grow. I want to see us broaden the base of the Special Projects pyramid.” This compact, people-pleasing team is on track to do just that.

Restoration In one of a series of smaller “on-call” projects for a client, a Special Projects crew solved a chronically wet basement by exposing and removing faulty waterproofing (middle), remedying the problem, and then restoring the face to better-than-before condition, on budget and on schedule.
It was the spring of 1980 when O&G and the firm of Levetry & Hurley reached final agreement on a long-term supply of mason materials and together began to absorb the assets of that shoreline engineering and construction company into their own O&G inventory. It turned out that one of the most valuable assets for O&G was the man himself – a man who could be called John Leverty. One morning in Torrington it was John Leverty who joined O&G and the firm of Leverty & Hurley to become a major player in the Connecticut construction arena.

In the early days of the 1980s, Leverty quickly became as close as he could to the company’s top management. He was very much a man of his word, that is, his word was both his bond and his bond was his word. Leverty knew how to move from room to room no matter what the setting and negotiate in favor of the company. He was a man who always knew how to get things done.

With time, John became as close as he could be to family. Ask Brad Oneglia, Senior Estimator, Asphalt Sales and Operations, who trained under John’s tutelage. The senior Oneglia sent his son to O&G in 2001 to be fit into the organization by John, knowing he would be expected to put his weight (and even more than that) as he learned the art of running an asphalt operation and the finer art of managing people.

“John knew how to move from room to room no matter what the setting and negotiate in favor of the company.”

“John exemplified O&G’s core values to a ’t,’ even off hours,” says Brad Oneglia. “His generosity, his work ethic, his willingness to listen and advise – John is a very wise man.” The younger Oneglia saw his mentor’s business acumen in action as Leverty picked up the phone to hold an impromptu meeting. He saw how the man built bridges and understood that there were at least two sides to a story. “Because of my access to John I came up to speed quickly. He was never shy to correct me. He was a mentor in every sense of the word, professionally and personally.”

John Leverty is a “family man” to lots of folks, not the least, naturally, his wife of over 50 years, Marylou, and his small tribe: three sons, a daughter and eight grandchildren. His son, John, Jr., works for O&G, coordinating much of the company’s paving as well as their southern Connecticut asphalt and stone/sand operations. O&G is a family business at its core, and John had an uncanny understanding of family businesses. He understood the complexity of dealing with strong, independent personalities, the kind that overcome obstacles and develop businesses into major entities. He had a flair for functioning in such an environment. He knew how and when to push hard, pull back there, keeping everybody happy as the business ball advanced down the field.

Outside of work John led many charitable and civic organizations, often prevailing upon O&G to help with the programs dear to his heart. He remains a devoutly religious man who, despite the no-nonsense demeanor he could summon when needed, never doused the compassion for people that burns in his core. If he could find a way to salvage a relationship and give a guy a break, that’s the path he’d chose.

He’d apply humor to defuse the tensions that accompany long hours working in construction. Dave Lemelin, longtime friend and the brunt of dozens of Leverty-Oneglia gags, recalls when they moved his unlocked company pickup to accompany long hours working in construction. Dave Lemelin, longtime friend and the brunt of dozens of Leverty-Oneglia gags, recalls when they moved his unlocked company pickup to teach him not leave the keys in it, snickering as Lemelin panicked. And the time, at Lemelin’s wedding reception in 1997, when John and Ray positioned the beaming groom for a photo by a horse-drawn carriage, framing him next to the horse’s hind end. When he returned to work from his honeymoon a poster of that photo was taped to Lemelin’s trailer wall.

On New Year’s Eve of 2005 John Leverty retired and headed to Florida. But his wealth of knowledge and experience soon led O&G to seek him out as an “on call” consultant. “Is Leverty finally getting out?” asked Lemelin recently. Yes, at 79 years young he actually, finally, is “out,” and although it is restating the obvious, John Leverty is missed.

JOHN LEVERTY, SR.

Farewell to the Diplomat

John Leverty works the telephone from his desk at Bostwick Avenue
Groton’s Marine Science Magnet High School has left port, a highly anticipated, hi-tech treasure offering shoreline students access to the future of aquaculture.

You know your school is something special when an admiral attends your ribbon cutting, your seamanship simulator is the envy of the sailors at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy across town, and your aquaculture center is being emulated around the nation. But that is just what is happening at the Marine Science Magnet High School of Southeastern Connecticut. This past August 24, MSMHS held an “Anchors Aweigh” ribbon-cutting ceremony with a crowd of exuberant well-wishers, dignitaries and media in attendance and has not looked back. But getting this one-of-a-kind “ship” built and launched was a story in itself.

Continued on Page 8
A Siting Saga

MSMHS is the brainchild of a consortium of school districts, facilitated and empowered by LEARN, and endorsed by the Connecticut Department of Education.

LEARN is one of six regional educational service centers in Connecticut with a mission that includes developing and facilitating programs wherever it sees a need. With MSMHS it envisioned a unique curriculum and related activities that focused on marine subjects and opportunities, drawing on the Connecticut shoreline's seagoing heritage.

For 15 years the school, whose collaboratively developed plan was given final approval by the Connecticut State Board of Education in 2001, was like a ship plying the seas looking for a place to drop anchor. Properties at six different sites in three shoreline communities were found, in succession, each seeming to be “the place” before some circumstance would remove it from the table. One location seemed so sure, in fact, that LEARN directed the project’s architect, JCJ of Hartford, to develop plans to fit it – before 50 yards of the access road leading to the school site was discovered to lie in a 500-year flood plain, nixing that location as well.

“That was particularly hard,” reflects Dr. Virginia Seccombe, Executive Director of LEARN. “After the plans were all drawn up we faced another complete restart and potentially having lost time and funding on plans that would not work for the eventual site.”

Finally, in November of 2009 the current site at Shennecossett Road in Groton, where the vacant Eastern Point School had stood since 1918, was selected and permitted so that demolition of Eastern Point could begin. Today the modestly sized school – 47,400 SF as compared, for example, to the 125,000 SF K-8 school O&G is building in Forestville – sits on approximately eight acres, just a few miles from the Naval Submarine Base and close to New London Harbor.

Ken Biega, O&G’s Project Executive overseeing the school’s development, worked closely with LEARN through much of the site search. “Because of the close fit between the previous location [for which detailed plans had been developed] and the final site, the architect’s design worked out perfectly.” It was a happy coincidence; other situations at Shennecossett Road were not as serendipitous.

For example, before demolition began, asbestos-laden materials were meticulously removed; when demolition ceased and excavation began, unexpected fill materials that had been deposited nearly a century earlier – layers of wood ash and even full-sized trees among them – were uncovered at the western end of the site. They needed to be removed and proper inert base added before foundation work could continue. “When you work at an old site,” remarks an experienced Biega, “you are always going to find surprises.”

Despite “surprises” which added work to the scope of the project, skillful management and a cooperative attitude kept the job on schedule. Abatement began in December of 2009, demolition began in January of 2010 and ran three months, construction began in July of 2010 and the school opening date of August 24, 2011 was maintained. “Had we not run into those issues we could have been done ahead of schedule,” speculates Mark Allen, O&G’s project manager at the site and a veteran with 35 years of construction experience under his tool belt.

“I always felt that O&G had our best interest at heart,” says Dr. Seccombe. “We had numerous specialty needs and O&G was always very responsive. It was a challenge making and tracking all the adjustments along the way but they did it well – and of course, we all love Ken Biega.”

Jean-Paul LeBlanc is one of LEARN’s “renaissance men,” having trained as a business manager but wearing various hats, including that of an overseer of the building of MSMHS. As the O&G team marches through its punchlist and prepares to depart this spring, LeBlanc looks back at the tenacity of
the team from the get-go. “O&G came on board in 2005 and stuck with us as this project meandered along, through all the wrinkles, through the life-support stages. They hung in there. They knew how important this project was to LEARN and the kids.”

MSMHS joins two other schools in the state with a maritime focus: New Haven’s venerable vo-ag institute, the Sound School Regional Vocational Aquaculture Center, built in 1980, and the Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Science and Technology Center, opened in 1993 and expanded in 2010 with a two-story, pitched roof extension project managed by O&G. But MSMHS has the distinction of being the state’s first all-day marine magnet school.

**Hi-tech, stem to stern**

Dr. Nic Spera is the school’s principal and an enthusiastic advocate for MSMHS. “We’re utilizing technology here as it is meant to be used.” All students receive a laptop, loaded with LanSchool software which makes the most of monitored, directed, interactive and online study. There is a wireless network that students access from anywhere, at any time. Teachers exploit their Promethean displays in the classrooms – long gone are chalkboards and erasers, being replaced by these large, interactive units that are white boards, digital displays for photos, screens for videos, and wired for interaction with locations around the globe.

The security system is even tailored to the school’s marine sciences focus. Students and faculty can enter the aquatic wing directly and it tracks who enters, the time of day and the duration of stay – and because access is right into the laboratory area, sea-day students can walk in muddy and wet from the oyster beds or a day on the ocean without tromping thru the main part of the building.

An especially eye-catching bit of technology is the electronic aquarium, situated prominently at the entrance to the science rooms. A pair of 50-inch, hi-resolution monitors arranged back to back displays a virtual marine ecosystem with a variety of creatures native to the Groton coastline. When students enter the area and the aquarium detects their motion, the creatures spring to life and move about the screen. Tap a fish as it swims by and up pops a small window describing it. The monitors are also used as a message board for announcements, a large display for educational videos – anything an AV system can do.

Principal Spera continues: “Our aquaculture tanks that simulate six different bodies of water are amazing – LEARN has built a culture and climate here with all the resources we need to educate these kids. It’s been a once-in-a-lifetime experience for me.”

A former professional baseball player in the Orioles organization, Spera subscribes to the adage whispered to Kevin Costner’s character in “Field of Dreams,” and we paraphrase here, “If you build it they will come.”

The adage has born itself out. Demand for the school’s specialized, cutting-edge curriculum now stands at 486 applications for fewer than 80 openings in the next class to enter in the fall of 2012. “We also have 83 freshmen and 23 sophomores now,” Spera adds, “who were willing to leave friends and the track they were on to get what this program and this facility offer.”

The aquaculture laboratory is the school’s technological centerpiece, among the largest and most sophisticated of its kind in America. Young aquaculturists here explore marine subjects and marine-related careers like fish farming and algaculture. The tanks can house fish, molluscs, crustaceans and aquatic plants.

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**Scan this QR Code with your smartphone to view a YouTube highlight video of the Marine Science Magnet School’s “Anchors Aweigh” opening ceremony.**

**Seamanship Training** Norwegian-built ship’s bridge simulator (left) and the console that controls it (right) provide realistic pilot training for MSMHS’s aspiring mariners.
in environments that simulate just about any body of water on the planet – from a New England stream to a Tahitian lagoon. The school’s schedule of alternating classroom and field days (they refer to them as “land and sea” or “dry and wet” days”) exposes students to both indoor classroom and on-the-water learning.

When it comes to training in seamanship, MSMHS students have some of the most hi-tech training devices available anywhere. “The school’s simulator is more advanced than what the cadets at the Coast Guard Academy have. The cadets’ will be down here to train on it. They’ll also be interacting with the students – it’ll be a nice give and take,” says Allen.

The trainer is a “Polaris” ships bridge simulator made by Norwegian Kongsberg Maritime. The instrumentation in the bridge console layout, with ships wheel, phone to the engine room, radar and numerous other ships controls simulate operating any number of vessels in any number of conditions and in a multitude of different scenarios. Want to learn how to pilot a tug in a fog bank, a freighter in stormy North Atlantic seas, or a cruise ship on an evening cruise off the Tuscan coastline? This system can do it with uncanny realism.

Behind the simulator is the instructor’s station with its computers and bank of monitors from which any of the simulation conditions can be changed. And in a smallish room next door sits the “Neptune” engine room simulator. It is used to train students in operating different engine and propulsion configurations that are found in various vessels, simulating normal and emergency situations and even adding the mechanical sounds characteristic of the engine rooms of different ships.

**Environmental steward**

The programs at MSMHS emphasize stewardship of the environment and aquatic resources; the school’s green features echo that emphasis.

Atop the school, for instance, angles an array of solar panels whose 3500 SF of effective area develop a maximum of 3000 W DC, which is inverted to AC and fed into the school’s power system. To their east is a 4,000 SF green roof, with hardy, low-or-no-maintenance local plants (including, as surprising as it may sound, native Connecticut cacti), that increases the school’s contribution to the water cycle, catches stormwater runoff that otherwise could pick up sediment and contaminants on its way to the sea, absorbs pollutants from rainwater, and provides a micro-habitat for insects and wildlife.

And further to the east, a short distance from the school, sits the grass-covered well field, part of the geothermal heating/cooling system whereby serious energy-saving contributions are made.

The geothermal system circulates a water/glycol mix through the field’s 84 wells, each drilled 480 feet deep, using two main circulating pumps, and then distributes the heated or cooled mix throughout the building with the assistance of 44 small heat pumps. Some studies have shown that approximately 70 percent of energy used in geothermal heat pump systems is renewable energy from the ground.

MSMHS marks the fifth school in as many years where O&G has installed a geothermal system to heat and cool the buildings. Mike Brennan, Assistant Vice President and Manager of Operations for the Building Division, has overseen the installation of them all. “Geothermal is the most important conservation feature here. The money savings is impressive over time. No boiler, no oil bill, no combustion into the atmosphere – all you are really paying for is running the pumps. It works year round.”

**Adjusting to the style of building**

The school appears ship-like itself, sea green, sleek, long and narrow. Porthole-like openings scattered across the concrete walls that run the length of the building, a 100-foot-long bridge into the main entrance that imitates a ship’s gangway, a sea green exterior with galvanized steel elements, and decorative interior accents that suggest sails and sandy sea bottoms – all reflect the school’s maritime mission.

For the O&G team there were some mental adjustments to be made. “This was different for us, to have a finished project that by design looks unfinished,” says Brennan. Most of the ceilings, for instance, have all their beams, ductwork, conduit, wires and pipes exposed and uniformly painted flat black.

“You need to get out of the usual mindset,” Brennan remarks, “which is, ‘this will all get covered up,’ when in fact it won’t.” Pipes and lines needed to be carefully cut through walls, for instance. To avoid rework and touch-up, an enormous amount of detailed coordination was required to get everything buttoned up before the painter came.

There was virtually no repetition in building the classrooms here, unlike other schools where often multiple rooms have identical designs. “That made it more of a challenge but more interesting, too,” says Allen. “Every room here is different.”

Any challenges in fitting the plans to the new site – and adding geothermal later in the game – were all handled smoothly thanks to streamlined cooperation between LEARN, the subcontractors, JCJ’s quick-thinking field rep and the O&G team.

“The owner-architect-builder relationship here has been just great,” says Allen. While
Our New Four-Point Focus Logo

The O&G logo is an iconic one: strong, clean and easily recognizable for decades. For that reason this change was not taken lightly. In fact, the logo has not been changed per se, but added to. The addition states the building blocks upon which the company’s success has been built since its inception. They are the building blocks on which the company’s continued success rests. Quality, safety, ethics and productivity represent the timeless core values of the employees, officers, and directors of the company as well as the entire Oneglia family. You’ll see the new “four-point focus logo” appearing around the company – watch for it!

O&G had worked with JCJ and many of the specialized subcontractors before, there were additional special consultants brought onto the team, in aquaculture, geothermal systems and learning technology, who were new teammates for Brennan, Allen and Project Engineer Mike Deschamps. But it all flowed smoothly.

Riding a new wave

Just as it exemplifies new ways of teaching and learning, MSMHS exemplifies a new way of designing and building the facility. Take BIM, which is replacing shelves full of “old school” paper building plans. Short for Building Information Modeling, BIM is computer-aided design that pushes plans for new buildings beyond flat, two-dimensional images into 3D representations.

When you get past the initial “gee-whiz” of seeing classrooms and laboratories in three dimensions and taking a virtual walkthrough on a monitor, you understand one of the most important practical values of BIM for builders, and it is the ability to detect clashes. “Clash detection” is preemptively spotting and eliminating errors that can plague a job once it shifts from plans to the field. “Clashes” are errors that cost money and waste time – when ductwork is installed according to a blueprint only to find it running square-on into a beam, for instance. BIM makes catching these flaws much easier.

The upfront expense of BIM more than offsets the traditional approach of fixing the error in the field via costly change orders. As BIM technology matures and designers become even more facile in its exploitation, design costs will decline and untold expensive, time-wasting change orders will never see the light of day.

BIM at MSMHS was confined to a master BIM coordination drawing package compiled by the plumbing/HVAC contractor and including electricals and mechanicals. The future, says Deschamps, will see BIM integral from the earliest stages of building projects, beginning with the architects’ renderings and flowing down through design and to the field, as is happening on O&G’s K-8 school project in Forestville. “Designers are coming through with 3D bid documents where all the details are called out so you avoid clashes,” he says. “Another new thing here,” says Allen, “is that the majority of our documentation and communication is electronic. It’s quicker, there is a lot less paper. Reviews and approvals are all electronic. LEARN is really behind the move to green.”

At building committee meetings, paper is rare. Instead of handouts, information is presented on large electronic whiteboards, displaying the contents of PC screens that are wirelessly connected. Electronic minutes are emailed. Handouts at meetings are few, so fewer noses are buried in paper and instead folks are more engaged in the give-and-take of a meeting.

“It’s vastly different,” observes Brennan, who over 32 years and 55 school projects with O&G is witnessing yet another advance in the development of school construction. “There is an evolution going on. This project has grabbed onto the front edge of the new wave, pun intended, and it’s been great.”

Green features and BIM planning

(top to bottom) 4,000 SF green roof; 3500 SF effective area solar panel array helps power the building; 3D BIM modeling was employed to head off costly change orders during construction
O&G, with long-standing joint venture partner Tutor Perini, began work in April of 2011 on the six-year, $356M I-95/I-91/Route 34 Interchange Reconstruction Project. Those involved refer to it simply as “Contract E,” named for the segment it completes in the larger series of projects making up the $2B Pearl Harbor Memorial Bridge replacement project, scheduled for completion in 2016.

The work involves reconstructing the eastbound approaches to the bridge, known familiarly as the Q Bridge: aging overpasses will be removed, new ones built, lanes widened and positions changed over 7.2 miles, all to speed the flow of traffic through the area for decades to come.

Work focuses on the confluence of Routes 34, 95 and 91 in what is perhaps the state’s busiest interchange: an average of 140,000 vehicles a day rumble over I-95 here, some 100,000 more than the 1950s design was ever meant to accommodate.

“This ambitious project,” said Governor Dannel Malloy at a ceremonial groundbreaking last June, “is the largest and most complex transportation renewal initiative ever undertaken in the State of Connecticut. These changes are long overdue and will be a welcomed sight for the many people who travel these roads daily.”

John Gemetro is Vice President, Heavy and Highway Division, where the project is being performed. “I’m expecting the same sort of great relationship we had with our customer on Moses,” referring to the Moses Wheeler Bridge Foundations Project performed for ConnDOT that wrapped up last November. “It was very uneventful, which is great. We all pulled in the same direction.”

Contract E, he says with understatement, is complicated. Chief among the challenges crews will face is the complexity of its stages

“E” By the Numbers
Notable quantities at “E”...

- 143,000 TONS of bituminous concrete
- 58,860 CUBIC YARDS of concrete
- 9.3 MILLION POUNDS of rebar
- 170,600 FEET of 16-inch concrete piles
- 366,240 CUBIC YARDS of earth excavation

The “A” Team at “E”

John Gemetro, Project Executive
Michael Daley, Project Manager
Larry Doyon, General Superintendent
Robin Listorti, Document Control Specialist
Matt Egensteiner, Project Coordinator
Dick Belcher, Cost Control
Joe Hudach, Project Accountant
Joe Sefcik and John Rentschler, Traffic Control
Kevin Voelker, Kevin Bernard and Joe Giacobbe, Retaining Walls and Bridge Structures
Billy Noll, Highway Superintendent
Bob Nardi, Structure Superintendent
Pete Hinman and Brent Schoppmann, Civil Engineering
Fred Howe, Night Supervisor
Jamie Drake and Brian Deperry, Quality Assurance/Quality Control
Ashlee Eason, Secretary

Additional staff from Tutor Perini rounds out structural steel engineering and installation.
and the interconnectedness of the bevy of contractors who, at numerous junctures, will all need to be prepared to reposition their operations simultaneously – and rapidly. ConnDOT will serve as the hub and “choreographer” for these stage changes.

The opening months of Project E offered an auspicious beginning. ConnDOT was able to identify previously unforeseen ways to open access to work areas, enabling multiple early stages to be combined into one. “We looked at it,” said Gemetro, “and we were able to roll later work ahead.”

O&G purchased a mammoth Manitowoc 14000 crane capable of hoisting 220 tons. The company purchased it specifically for this project in a “fixed lead” configuration to speed the installation of over 170,000 feet of concrete piles the project requires. Pile driving began this past September.

Both the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and ConnDOT’s Office of Environmental Compliance give high marks to O&G/Tutor Perini. They cite, for instance, the team’s efforts to control erosion and its success with site stabilization during Hurricane Irene. Bev Flowers is an Environmental Analyst 3 for ConnDEEP working closely with the project. “What I appreciate most about working with O&G/Tutor Perini is their proactive stance. They are taking environmental compliance to a new level. At our meetings they point out upcoming potential environmental problems to me and say, ‘Here’s how we propose to tackle it, do you agree?’ It truly is a team effort. I know they aren’t leaving me out there alone.”

While always preparing for the worst, Gemetro admits to being pleased with his team’s progress. “The project is currently three months ahead of schedule, which is impressive considering the challenges of such a large scale project.”

**MORE “E”**

Scan this code with your smartphone to learn more about the largest highway project in state history.
**THE “KLEEN GIANT” IS UP AND RUNNING**

The Kleen Energy Power Plant in Middletown, Connecticut, successfully completed its startup and commissioning and “went commercial” in early July of 2011, making up to 620MW of electricity available to the regional grid.

Transitioning the Kleen Energy power plant into full operation required that 108 complex systems be operationally verified. Under the direction of engineers on site and the scrutiny of the engineering firm of record, each system underwent demonstration and testing per a detailed “turnover package” written specifically for it. Only then could the owner receive the power plant as “good to go.”

Rick Audette, Director of O&G’s Power and Energy Group and Project Director at Kleen since work began in 2007, reflects on the four-year odyssey that was the Kleen Energy Power Plant Project. “Tenacious is how I’d describe everyone involved here. Managers led the effort through some of the most challenging conditions any of us had ever experienced.” From the tragic explosion that claimed six lives (see below), through the hard work of rebuilding the entire heart of the plant, and despite the winter of 2011 where 21 inches of snow blanketed the site over 13 days in January, the entire project team, from trenches to trailers, rallied to push the project ahead.

Audette has high praises for Senior Project Manager Lou Kesselman, Engineering Manager Matt Tobin, and Site Manager John Rouleau – and men and women too numerous to name. “I’ve worked in power plant construction for 35 years,” says Audette, “and I’ve never seen focus like this. What these men and women accomplished in the face of adversity was phenomenal.”

By all accounts the startup and commissioning at Kleen ran more than smoothly, which was no surprise to Kesselman. “We brought 108 systems online in a very accelerated way because we considered it thoroughly in the planning stages years ago.” In his experience the team building the plant is often at loggerheads with the startup and commissioning team coming in to get the plant ready to go online. “We committed to a different approach and got the startup crew into the planning.” It was an approach that paid big dividends at Kleen.

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**“Tenacious” Crews Bring Kleen Power Plant Online**

Kleen Energy is living up to its name, promising to be the highest performing facility in New England for energy efficiency and lowest emissions in electricity generation.

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**A Somber Commemoration**

“We are gathered on this solemn anniversary to remember the lives of six men and to keep their memory and honor alive and to pray for their families and loved ones and for all who were hurt.”

With these words the Reverend Robert Tucker opened a memorial service at the Kleen Energy plant in Middletown, a year to the day after a catastrophic explosion at the rising plant claimed the lives of six men. Between 400 and 500 coworkers of those lost in the explosion, along with plant owners and O&G senior management, assembled in near silence and stood motionless through the 20-minute ceremony. Fittingly, it was held inside the generation building, a structure that was rebuilt and referred to by workers at the site as their “ground zero.”

“Today gave the men a time to come together and reflect on all they’ve gone through and lost,” said Site Manager John Rouleau. “We are also united in going forward and finishing this job with honor.” The commemoration was conceived and organized by O&G President David Oneglia, with the assistance of Rouleau and Project Secretary Robin Chacon.
In an economy where residential projects are not nearly as abundant as in past years, commercial projects have become the lifeblood of the Masonry Division. Central to successful projects are the Division’s sales representatives who build relationships with architects and mason contractors. Coupled with O&G’s longstanding reputation in the industry for quality and performance, these relationships are the driving force of sustainable business growth for the Division.

“We have one of the best sales teams in the industry,” Craig Alvarez, Vice President of Marketing and Sales, declared recently. “Each member of the team brings years of experience and a distinct skill set. This makes us uniquely qualified for any challenge that comes our way.”

From Specifications to Client Service: Steps to a Winning Project

Getting a job specified is the first step in developing a winning commercial project. Working closely with architects and owners to help realize their vision for a new project, Masonry Division sales professionals consider not just aesthetics but LEED certification, durability and budget when they recommend the masonry materials that best fit the project. The ultimate goal is to have their recommendations specified in the blueprints.

The next step in the process is quoting and closing on the project. Here the sales team works alongside the contractor who has been awarded the job to deliver the best pricing and value among competing suppliers. O&G’s reputation for performance, diverse and extensive product lines, competitive pricing and reliability all enter into the contractor’s decision.

Once the materials for a project have been
awarded to O&G, servicing the project is the last important step. Each member of the team – including the fabricators at the Beacon Falls Fabrication and Distribution Facility under the watchful eye of Manager John Baranoski – works together to ensure that the products and services O&G delivers meet or exceed every specification developed by the architect, and are delivered where they’re needed, when they’re needed.

“O&G’s reputation for staying on budget and on time has assisted in strengthening the relationships with our architectural customers, and has opened up many more opportunities for additional work,” Architectural Sales Representative Scott Lockwood remarked. Also key are the numerous manufacturers in O&G’s growing portfolio: many offer new products that feature a highly rated sustainable element, something that is very popular with architectural firms seeking to meet “green” specifications.

“Our sales representatives all work tirelessly to build relationships with suppliers and clients that generate results, while management makes decisions to acquire equipment and materials to make O&G the one-stop source for almost any project. The return on investment is reflected in the growth of the commercial business sector, which is a vital segment of our diverse construction company,” Kara Oneglia, Assistant Vice President of the Masonry Division, stated.

The Projects Speak for Themselves

Recent collaborations exemplify the breadth of O&G’s capabilities, from supplying quantities of unique brickface to developing novel fabrication techniques to converting stone excavated during construction into handsome veneer.

Ryan-Matura Library. The rededication of the Ryan-Matura Library project at Sacred Heart University in November 2011 capped the yearlong work of O&G, managed by Architectural Sales Representative Ken Wadeka. O&G was awarded the project for a bistro-style study area that features stunning contemporary stone products from Real Stone Systems. Masonry included bluestone panels on a prominent wall, an interior water feature and flagging on the café floor, while exterior highlights included pavers in the surrounding patio and bluestone caps. Servicing the client on the project paid dividends for all parties involved: “I worked with the general contractor from Coreno Marble and Tile building a solid working relationship, and as a result of our collaboration and the give-and-take, about halfway through the project we added an exterior water feature and bluestone caps for additional seating,” Wadeka remarked.

Balloon Italian Restaurant and Social Club. Located in Mohegan Sun Casino, Balloon Italian Restaurant and Social Club boasts an elaborate, 575 SF bar fabricated out of White Carrara marble. Along with the substantial size, there are intricate detailed moldings that grace the front façade and also sit on top of the bar itself as a drink rail. The moldings and their precise placement give the illusion that the pieces were hand carved from large, solid blocks of marble. Honing and purposely distressing them helped replicate the old stone tops that can be found throughout the back roads of Italy, the origin of this particular marble. All of the moldings were made in O&G’s Beacon Falls fabrication facility using a collaboration of both high-tech machinery and the skillful hand craftsmanship of the finishing crew. Design credit goes to Alvarez-Brock of New York City. Wholesale Sales Representative Nicole Gorman spearheaded the effort at O&G.

Klein Biology Towers Cafe. Yale University recently completed an interior renovation of their Klein Biology Towers. The challenge for O&G’s countertop fabrication crew was getting the DuPont Zodiaq quartz surfacing material specified for countertops in the building’s cafe to conform to a curvature and create a thick cylinder with as few seams as possible. They decided to mill the material down to less than 1/8” thick and then gently heat it to shift the epoxy resin in the Zodiaq to a pliable state. The material was then wrapped around the preformed tops, also constructed of Zodiaq. The front aprons of the countertops became virtually seamless. With the help of Bergen Architectural Millwork the job was completed and installed in time for the fall 2011 semester. Nicole Gorman was O&G’s Architectural Sales Representative.

Chilled Water Plant. Another Yale project completed in early 2011 is the new Chilled Water Plant in Science Area Park. Charney Architects and Yale University representatives selected brick from Yankee Hill Brick, an architectural manufacturer located in Nebraska and distributed exclusively by O&G. Architectural Sales Representative Lucas Cherry assisted the firm during the product selection process.

Crescent Residence Hall. Scott Lockwood worked with Centerbrook Architects and Planners in 2007 to develop specifications for the Crescent Residence Hall project on Quinnipiac University’s Hamden campus. As its name suggests, the large building is crescent-shaped with a radius that is the length of...
a football field. Completed in 2010, the nine-story dormitory required over one million face brick and more than half a million structurally reinforced radial CMU (concrete block) installed in walls that were faced with curved, precast panels, copings, sills, and lintels. This was the largest commercial job involving brick and brick shapes that the Mason Division had managed to-date. Constant collaboration between O&G, the mason and architect during the two years of construction resulted in attention to every masonry detail, and a building that won Masonry Construction Online’s “Project of the Year” award in 2010. O&G’s Building Division performed as general contractor, bringing two divisions together during the entire project.

**Palace Theater.** The renovation of the Palace Theatre in 2008 was no easy feat. Originally built in 1922 the renovation included 60% original and 40% new material. O&G’s Masonry Division supplied numerous stone products including two granite countertops, marble in the grand entryway and granite bar rails in the theater to match the existing stone. The restoration was managed by Conrad Schmitt Studios in Wisconsin, with coordination of the masonry renovation efforts at O&G by Showroom Sales Representative Bonnie-Lee Simpson. She provided just enough material to stay within the 40% new material restoration guideline for this mega-renovation.

**Whole Foods Market.** O&G teamed up with Construction Management & Builders on behalf of Whole Foods Market to provide a creative service solution during the building of the food purveyor’s new store in Fairfield. Taking advantage of a situation that was just too good to pass up, Whole Foods Market used the rock-filled property they had just developed to make a “green” building exterior. “The stone façade was created using existing stone from the excavation,” Masonry Division’s Vice President of Operations Bob Rizzo remarked. “We took the excavated stone and manufactured it into thin stone veneer for use on the exterior facade.” Whole Foods held a “bread-breaking” ceremony during the grand opening of the store in June of 2011. “We always strive to offer innovative processes and solutions that create value for our customers,” Rizzo continued. “The recycled stone here is a perfect example of one of the value-added services we can offer.”

**Parking Garage.** After a year of demolition and site preparation work, Norwalk Hospital’s new parking garage and massive retaining wall is beginning to take shape. O&G’s Architectural Sales Representative Jon Zeo is managing the masonry product for the 75,000 SF retaining wall featuring a majestic-looking New England granite product.

**Freeman Centennial School Addition.** The Freeman Centennial School in Norfolk, Massachusetts, needed an addition built and O&G was selected among bidders to supply the masonry products. The new addition, begun over the summer of 2011, features over 25,000 square feet of Techo-Bloc’s straight-edge building veneer system, applied by traditional masonry technique over a CMU backup wall. A unique, custom blended color, specified by Flansburgh Associates architects, was included in the process. This is one of the company’s largest manmade veneer projects, managed by Mark Vigneaull, New England Sales Representative.

**Waterbury City Hall.** The 90,000 SF, three-story, brick, marble, and limestone Colonial Revival-style building was designed by Cass Gilbert, architect of New York City’s first skyscraper and “Cathedral of Commerce,” the Woolworth Building, as well as the U.S. Supreme Court Building and a host of other notable edifices. But at the turn of the new century, the building’s former grandeur was rapidly fading as a host of structural and mechanical issues eroded the structure. Working with the Waterbury Redevelopment Corporation, and the architectural firm of DeCarlo & Doll, O&G sourced and supplied 5,000 SF of mountain and olympian marble from “green certified” quarries in Danby, Vermont, as well as 50,000 bricks and 17,000 pavers. Scott Lockwood led the specification, sales and support effort for O&G.
ENERGY SAVERS. O&G has retrofitted a number of its facilities with energy-saving, cost-cutting upgrades to motors and compressors, refrigerated units and lighting. Cost savings and the reduction in environmental impact are considerable. At the Beacon Falls Fabrication and Distribution Center alone, for example, lifetime energy savings is estimated at $114,000, with 3813 fewer gallons of oil consumed and nearly 65,000 pounds of greenhouse gas and acid-rain elements reduced at power plants. Lighting retrofits were undertaken at the Main Office and the South Main, Bridgeport and Southbury vehicle maintenance facilities. And after testing at the Main Office cafeteria, O&G retrofitted the 30 refrigerated vending machines at various facilities with “Vending Miser” which cut their energy consumption by 51%. General Counsel Paul Balavender and Property Manager Sharon Okraska coordinated the investigation and implementation. The effort was incentivized by the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund (CEEF), administered by CL&P.
With supervisors, foremen and management from all divisions gathered together, the Annual Safety Meeting is a time to reiterate the emphasis O&G places on safety, from road jobs and building sites to loading docks and deliveries. It also serves as a launching point for new safety initiatives that implement the latest developments and techniques into O&G’s operations.

2011’s assembly was held on May 24th at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington with some 150 employees in attendance. James Rodger, O&G’s Director of Safety, addressed the crowd. “A good superintendent recognizes that the workers’ safety is in their hands and that they must ensure that every obstacle to safety is dealt with swiftly and without exception,” he said.

O&G employees from every division were recognized for embodying the company’s culture of safety. Kevin Clark, a superintendent in the Heavy Civil Division and 21-year veteran with O&G, received the corporate-wide 2011 Safety Achievement Award for his outstanding and consistent work at the Kleen Energy Project where he has been assigned since 2007. With characteristic humility, Clark reflected on the recognition: “I was honored to receive the award since safety is of the highest priority at O&G but it really should be shared with John Rouleau, Sean McNeil, and all of the O&G project team.”

Not by coincidence, safety is at the top of O&G’s four-fold “safety, quality, ethics and productivity” focus, and the company proves its dedication to safe workplaces by enhancing its safety program every year. Says Dan Carey, O&G’s Director of Human Resources, “You cannot stay at the top by sitting still. We begin and end every year asking what we can do to become better, to become safer, and to even more effectively protect our workers, our clients and our company.”

**PEAK PERFORMERS.** Outstanding safety records were recognized across the company at the Annual Safety Meeting. (All group photos left to right) 1 Company-Wide Safety Achievement Award: Kevin Clark; 2 Some 150 supervisors, foremen and management attended the event; 3 Vice Chairman, Raymond Oneglia; 4 Director of Safety, James Rodger; 5 Masonry Division Achievement Award: Wayne Zagrodnik, John Baranoski III, presenter Robert Rizzo, James Gallagher; 6 Heavy Highway Division Achievement Award (Moses Wheeler Project): Robert Nardi, Kevin Voelker, Matthew Egensteiner, Larry Doyon, Michael Daley, presenter John Gemetro, Jr.; 7 Vice President of Operations, Masonry Division, Bob Rizzo; 8 Assistant Vice President, Materials Division, T.J. Oneglia; 9 Building Division Achievement Award: Robert Rodriguez, George Graikoski, Christopher Rizy, presenter Aaron Mednick. 10 Vice President, Building Division, Aaron Mednick 11 Vice President, Equipment, Jimmy Zambero 12 Heavy Highway Division Achievement Award (Merritt Parkway Project): Craig Miller, Michael Gemmell, Brett Stackhouse; 13 Asphalt Division Achievement Award: presenter James Rodger, Robert Riggi.
John Gemetro, Sr.

On November 4th the O&G family lost one of its senior stalwarts, a worker and friend whose dedication set the bar for many who would follow in his footsteps.

John Gemetro, Sr., was widely respected throughout the company, working loyally for 45 years, the last 40 of which he served as a superintendent with the Heavy Highway Division. He retired in November of 1996.

He embodied the company’s philosophy of doing whatever it took on any given job to make it come out right. His was always yeoman’s work. The size or complexity of a job were immaterial; doing it right was its own reward.

Gemetro started at O&G when founder Andrew Oneglia was at the helm, working alongside Andrew’s three sons. He did whatever the fledgling company required of him, whenever it was required, whether applying his skills as a mason or offloading tons of material and supplies from trucks.

His son, John Gemetro, Jr., is Vice President, Heavy and Highway Division. Senior’s love of heavy civil construction was grafted into his son, who turned from preparing for a career in criminal justice to follow his father.

Besides their shared love of heavy civil construction, the two were friendly competitors on the links. Gemetro, Jr., recalls hundreds of outings together, and especially the two-day marathon at Disney where the pair logged 72 holes. He also recalls his father’s quiet but strong passion for the company: “My father really enjoyed the people he worked with here. He never wanted to work anywhere else. Next to family and being married, O&G came first.”

With his health slowly ebbing, one of the last things he asked of his son was that he take him and his wife of 57 years, Lenora, for a Sunday drive. He wanted to travel through the new Brookfield Route 7 highway extension. It was a highway project Gemetro himself never worked on, but one in which he was keenly interested nonetheless.

He passed two weeks shy of what would have been his eightieth birthday.

Oakley Osterhout

Oakley was a product of Torrington who graduated from Torrington High, married Julia Morzella, and moved to Harwinton where he lived most all his working life – the final forty years of which were at O&G.

Eschewing the harsh winters he’d worked through all those years as a heavy equipment operator, Oakley and Julia packed up and migrated south in 1999, first to Largo, Florida, then in 2006 to Peoria, Arizona, and ultimately, in 2010, to Westlake Village, California, northwest of Los Angeles.

Oakley sometimes worked a crane but most often it was a shovel, either in a quarry where he loaded trucks or on the numerous road jobs to which he was assigned. “He was a good, loyal employee, a first-class operator,” remembers Tony Damiano, Assistant Vice President, Materials Division. John Jenkins, who worked closely with “Oakey” for years as his supervisor at the Southbury quarry, remembers him as a great worker with a sense of humor, liked by everyone, and good at what he did.

We remember Oakley for his quiet demeanor, his ready smile and the jokes he would crack to lighten the mood. What some may not know is that he was an avid student of history, was on good terms with his computer (unlike many of his peers raised “pre-silicon”), and tinkled the ivories for the joy of it.

Oakley died on November 1 at 77 years of age after a progressive illness. Besides his wife of 55 years he leaves four children, eight grandchildren, one great grandchild and many at O&G who considered him a good friend.
Although he worked just two years as a utility man at the Bridgeport Mason Supply Yard, a “jack of all trades” doing whatever building and grounds maintenance was needed, TONY CIFONEretires with a fondness for the company typical of a much longer-term employee.

“They were there for me and I was there for them. They are excellent people and I believe I could have stayed there as long as I wanted – I really appreciated that. I enjoyed every day.” He especially recalls the day Bob Rizzo, VP of Operations for the Masonry Division, brought Tony to see a beam taken from the World Trade Center that O&G incorporated into a monument at Fairfield University: “That was moving, something I’ll never forget.”

Tony came by building maintenance naturally, having worked in his father’s home improvement business beginning in 1970, taking it over in 1991, and passing it along to his younger brother in 2004. “In 2013 it’ll be 50 years in the family, and we’ll turn it over to the next generation,” he says. Since 2010 Tony has been buying distressed homes and repairing them for rental use. He met his wife, Joanne, when they were 14, and after 45 years of marriage the couple is enjoying retirement. He is helping his daughter and son-in-law rehab an old farmhouse on 40 acres, and drives a tractor in the fields with his seven-year-old grandson, his “right hand man.” Life is good, Tony: enjoy your days in the sun!

You’d think if you bought yourself a souped-up 1930 “T Bucket” just before you retired that you’d drive it more now that you are not punching a clock than when you were. But that’s not the case for ANDY CRANSTON who didn’t fire up the hot rod once since last March. With a wife, seven children and nine grandkids, not to mention a menagerie that includes donkeys and goats, Andy is busily immersed in doing many things for other people: he recently installed a new floor for one daughter and just wrapped a kitchen remodel for another, for instance. Andy drove mixers for 44 years, the last 16 of which were at O&G. He found it challenging and interesting and cannot recall any issues in all his years, save one recent exception. “We were delivering concrete for a retaining wall on the shore of Candlewood Lake, down a steep, steep hill. If anything let go you’d end up in the drink. It felt like I was standing up in the cab going down that hill. Now that was a little scary.” Andy remains active, playing some tennis with Theresa, his wife of 28 years, and waterskiing at a family summer home on a New York lake. “I got to know the guys I drove with in Danbury real well, they’re my good friends. I miss ‘em.” We miss you, too, Andy. Enjoy your busy retirement!

When a young RALPH DOLAN was searching for what he wanted to do in life, he enrolled in a couple of computing classes that piqued his interest. That was 1967, when the light was just rising on the world of business computing machines. Some 40 years later, the last 15 of which were spent at O&G as a Senior Programmer/Analyst, he reflects on a career devoted entirely to the fruit of that initial chance exploration. “My career has been spent doing almost the same thing – different software, different systems, but the same thing: using computers to solve people’s problems and make their lives easier.” At O&G the majority of Ralph’s time was divided between supporting O&G’s accounting functions and its mason supply yards. While purchased software formed the “core” of the company’s platform, large pieces of code needed to be written to adapt it into something that would meet O&G’s unique requirements. That’s what Ralph and the IT Department would do. Ralph and Sue, his wife of 43 years, now enjoy the domestic life, catching up on things around the home. They have travelled, notably to Orlando three times by car (“I don’t do TSA,” he quips), taking two different grandchildren and once visiting a great grandchild living there. Despite the challenges and deadlines, he says, “My years at O&G were fun.” Thank you, Ralph, for helping make our working lives a little bit easier!

When O&G purchased Silliman Co. in 1979, one of the appreciating assets it acquired was JOHN JENKINS. A veteran quarry superintendent, John dedicated the rest of his working life – about 30 years – to overseeing plant operations at the Southbury Quarry. “O&G treated me well. All I did was do my job and bring the young fellows along,” he says. He had attempted retirement a few years earlier, but was talked out of it: the company had him in mind for building a new plant at their recently acquired New Milford quarry. He acquired, and two or so years later a beautiful, big plant was up and running. “It was a piece of cake,” he reflects. “O&G has never been afraid to invest in improvements at their quarries. So much of what we use – for roads, foundations, concrete, drainage – starts there.” While he misses the people, he’s content, even happy in retirement, considering himself a “blessed man with everything I need,” with wife Barbara at home and their two children and four grandkids all nearby. Another thing John does enjoy is getting outdoors during rifle season and exacting revenge on the local deer population that gifted him with a debilitating case of acute Lyme Disease from which now, thankfully, he is cured. John, thank you for your steady leadership and years of dedicated service.

Another long-term employee with 29 years at O&G – she began her working life with the company and never left – LISA LOCHE retired this past summer as Accounts Receivable Manager. She came to O&G, a place where more than a few of her relatives worked, after recuperating from an automobile accident in 1978 that left her partially paralyzed. “I liked the company and the people,” she says, adding, “There is a real sense of family. They gave me this position, and they also gave me the fight to come in to work everyday, even on those days when I did not want to.” Her next door neighbor, retired O&G employee Patricia Pia, helped her get her position at O&G “right out of my hospital bed.” While she worked a bit in 1978 and 1979, against doctor’s orders, she began in earnest in 1982, learning the ropes and eventually becoming the manager of the AR Department. This past fall she moved to Holden, Massachusetts, with her boyfriend, Rich. She divides her day taking care of a busy house and helping Rich with his drywall business from her home office. Thanks, Lisa – you continue to inspire us!

WILLIAM “BILL” LONGLEY is no stranger to these pages. When he retired back in 1997, little did we know he’d be back as a heavy equipment operator, working as many hours as his retirement plan would permit and driving his total years of service to the company to 30. Bill was born on a farm and learned to enjoy hard work and all the associated machines – tractors, balers and the like. In the service in 1956 he learned to run cranes, shovels and dozers. From there he jumped into construction and stayed in the field until he retired (the “official” second retirement!). Bill worked all over, unloading barges, running a drag line, but mostly he worked at the Southbury quarry. “I was always kept busy there. Some days we would load 300 trucks. One day I logged over 100 miles on the loader. We worked at high speed, ’I’ll tell you!’ But hard work never intimidated Bill. “I loved doing a day’s work, operating heavy equipment. I had a good life, they treated me well.” Today he’s driving himself just as hard, doing “a little of this, a little of that.” In his spare time he plays a fair share of golf, tee-ing up in three different leagues in Torrington (he’s a 12 handicap at Torrington’s Eastwood Country Club). Keep rolling along, Bill, and try to stay in the fairway!

“I’ve always enjoyed working with people during my 50-plus years as an estimator, particularly at O&G with the folks in our department,” says DUNCAN MCDONALD. He cut his estimating teeth in the late 1950s with a Fairfield, Connecticut, firm, then opened a construction estimating business with a partner in the ‘70s and ran it until joining O&G in 1995. Having worked with about 40 contractors every year, including O&G, he was drawn to the company when a position was available in the Building Division: “Because I have seen how so many companies operate I don’t say this casually: O&G is a premier company, very well organized and very well run. Working for O&G as a sub was always a great satisfaction, and more so working internally.” Since retiring, Duncan and his bride of 43 years, Betty, have been indulging their twin interests – traveling and history – by motoring to Lexington and Concord, Gettysburg and points in between, exploring America in an unhurried fashion. More trips are in the planning. The McDonalds also head outdoors “each and every day, weather permitting,” to walk and explore, camera in hand to capture the scenery and the details of nature. Duncan also enjoys shortwave DXing – tuning in to capture and identify distant radio signals. Thank you, Duncan, for years of solid estimating service at O&G!
NEW LIFE FOR WATERBURY’S SECOND OLDEST SCHOOL

Built in 1890 but shuttered since the mid-1990s, Duggan School was given new life and reopened in 2011. Under O&G’s program management, Duggan’s original structure was completely gutted and renovated, and 43,000 SF of additional space was added. The mansard roof was reconstructed with dormers to replicate the original, and the existing clock tower, an icon in the Brooklyn neighborhood, was reconditioned. The project was designed by JCJ Architecture.

Trinity College Summer Projects
Hartford, CT

Since building their 46,000 SF hockey rink in 2005, O&G has enjoyed an ongoing relationship with Trinity College. The company recently contracted with Trinity on a design basis for a series of projects which began in the fall of 2011 and will be completed in August of 2012. Projects include the demolition of the existing roofs and construction of upgraded ones for the Oosting Gym, McCook Science Building and two adjoining buildings, and the old section of the Trinity Library. Also included is the design verification of equipment, controls and ductwork serving the Ferris Gym pool. The pool’s DryTron unit, which controls dehumidification and water temperature, will be replaced in a carefully staged and coordinated process. The design-build team comprises Senior Estimator John Humes, Project Manager Damon Cooke and Senior MEP Supervisor George Parenteau for O&G, Brian Solywoda of Kaestle Boos as architect representative, and Scott Madigan representing the project engineer, VanZelm Heywood and Shadford.

UConn Reclaimed Water Facility
Storrs, CT

The University of Connecticut has awarded O&G a general construction contract to build a new Reclaimed Water Facility (RWF) with the capacity to produce one million gallons of reclaimed water per day. The project houses a microfiltration membrane system, UV radiation system, pumping and piping systems, and chemical facilities within a 12,000 square foot facility. Also included are a precast concrete water storage tank, yard utilities, roadways, plumbing, heating, ventilating, air conditioning, building automation systems, lighting and an electrical system associated with the building and processing system. A 4,000 LF buried pipeline connecting the RWF and the Central Utility Plant was installed across the campus and included a pipeline for irrigating adjacent Sherman Field. Construction on this $16.8M project began in June of 2011 and is scheduled to be completed in December of 2012. UConn is represented by SBS. The project engineer is Hazen & Sawyer. O&G’s team is led by Project Manager George Graikoski and Superintendent Chris Rizy.

Harper’s Ferry Road Pump Station
Waterbury, CT

Working for the City of Waterbury’s Bureau of Water Pollution Control, O&G will relocate and upgrade a sewer pump station in order to accommodate the upcoming I-84 highway relocation project. Construction is expected to begin this March with major construction likely to take up to two years. The new station will be approximately 50 feet high with a 60- by-40-foot finished footprint, requiring some 1,000 CY of concrete. Construction of the new station includes three high-flow wastewater pumps and related drive motors, piping, controls and a standby generator. Excavation for the pump station to depths of 40 feet will require shoring, dewatering and rock removal. Work also includes a new access road to the station with storm drainage and water and electric service. Major utility work includes installing 1,200 LF of 36-inch concrete sanitary sewer pipe with oversized manholes, 500 LF of 20-inch iron sewage force main and 250 LF of 12-inch iron sanitary pipe, between 25 and 35 feet below grade. The project is valued at $7.5M.