

**NEWS BULLETIN**

AN ASSOCIATION OF INDIVIDUALS



**OF THE MOLES**

ENGAGED IN HEAVY CONSTRUCTION

**HOLING**

**THROUGH**

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APRIL, 1996

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## **Charles F. Vachris Elected President of The Moles**

CHARLES F. VACHRIS, Principal of Charles F. Vachris, P.E., Consulting Engineers of Garden City, New York has been elected to serve as President of the Moles for the 1996/1997 year. He will receive the gavel from retiring President, Gerard A. Neumann, Jr., at the Annual Business Meeting and Dinner to be held on Wednesday, May 1, 1996, at The New York Hilton Hotel.

Other officers elected are: First Vice President, ROGER J. LUDLAM, Park Construction Company; Second Vice President, JOHN F. DONOHOE, Moretrench American Corp.; Treasurer, PETER S. SCHNEIDKRAUT, Grow Construction Company; Secretary, EDWARD CRUZ, E. E. Cruz and Company; Sergeant-at-Arms, BERNARD A. GRAND, Slattery Associates, Inc.

Trustees elected for three (3) year terms are: ALFRED H. BRAND, Mueser Rutledge Consulting Engineers; WILLIAM G. MURPHY, The Halmar Corporation; GEORGE P. NEUMANN, Spearin, Preston & Burrows, Inc.; and DONALD E. UNBEKANT, Perini Corporation.



CHARLES F. VACHRIS

Charlie Vachris graduated from Yale University with honors in 1961 and worked one year as a design engineer for Praeger-Kavanaugh-Waterbury in New York City. Thereupon, he spent two years as an officer in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Fort Knox, Kentucky. He served as the Engineering Officer for the 160th Engineer Group (Construction) and subsequently for the 538th Engineer Battalion (Construction). After completing his military service in 1964, Charlie took the position of Vice President and eventually President of Vacar Construction Corporation, a family owned firm specializing in heavy underground and marine construction in the New York Metropolitan Area.

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## Charles F. Vachris

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Charlie attended Columbia University School of Engineering and received his Master Degree in 1968.

With Vacar Construction Corporation he was involved with the construction of several large piers and wharves in Brooklyn, Port Newark and Port Elizabeth for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. The firm also constructed the foundations for the Cross Bay Parkway Veterans Memorial Bridge in Queens.

In 1979 Vacar went out of business and Charlie joined the Edward B. Fitzpatrick Corporation as Vice President of Engineering and Estimating. In 1982 he started the firm of Charles F. Vachris, P.E., Consulting Engineers, providing a comprehensive range of engineering services for contractors, private and public owners, municipalities and other design professionals. The firm specializes in the fields of heavy foundation and marine construction.

Charlie has been active in professional organizations including the National Society of Professional Engineers, the American Society of Civil Engineers and the American Consulting Engineers Council.

Since becoming a Mole in 1979, Charlie has served as a member of the Finance Committee, as treasurer, as Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Awards Committee and as First and Second Vice President.

Charlie has also been active in community affairs, having served as Trustee of his village. He and his wife Gay have five sons, three of whom are married and have four grandchildren.

## ThirtyFive New Members Elected

At the Executive Committee meeting on April 2, 1996, thirty five new members were elected to membership in The Moles, with membership effective May 1, 1996. In alphabetical order, they are:

Jack J. Agresti  
Guy F. Atkinson Company  
Marc A. Beljan  
Belbold Contracting Corporation  
Richard E. Beumer  
Sverdrup Corporation  
John Bidosky  
American Bridge Company  
Gerard P. Brady  
Gerard P. Brady-Law Office  
Richard M. Brisch  
ICI Explosives, USA  
Thomas P. Condrin  
L.B. Foster Company  
Cesare De Rose  
Thalle Construction Company  
Mark Fitzgerald  
Willis Corroon Const. Svcs. Corp.  
Stephen R. Forrestel  
Cold Spring Construction Co.  
John R. Lamberson  
Lamberson Koster & Company  
Christopher Larsen  
The Halmar Corporation  
Raymond J. Maffei  
Perini Corporation  
Henry J. Marcelle  
The Fort Miller Company  
Jeffrey E. Mazur  
Cal-Tran Associates, Inc.  
Bradford D. Mills  
High Steel Structures, Inc.  
Patrick D. Mullen  
Yonkers Contracting Company  
Thomas J. O'Neill  
Parsons Brinkerhoff  
John R. Peckham  
Peckham Industries, Inc.  
John P. Picone  
John P. Picone, Inc.

## THIRTY FIVE NEW MEMBERS ELECTED (Continued from left)

David E. Pinyot  
Nicholson Construction Co.  
Robert A. Pond  
Frontier-Kemper Constructors  
Irving J. Ragsdale  
Clark Construction, Inc.  
Stephen C. Redmond  
Frontier-Kemper Constructors  
Robert A. Reseigh  
Atkinson Construction  
Robert J. Ronayne  
NYC Dept. of Transportation  
Paul J. Scagnelli  
Schiavone Construction Co.  
Joseph Scalamandre  
Peter Scalamandre & Sons  
Dominick Scotto  
Armitage & Co., Inc.  
Harry Stricker  
Perini Corporation  
Thomas W. Sutton  
Karl Koch Erecting Co., Inc.  
David R. Wanhatalo  
Frontier-Kemper Constructors  
Ronald P. Wells  
Dillingham Construction  
Henry R. Whitty  
The Whitty Company, Inc.  
William L. Womack  
Perini Corporation

## MWRA TO LET TUNNEL WORK

The Massachusetts Water Resource Authority will be receiving bids this spring on a \$228 million water supply tunnel in Framingham and Natick, MA. Tom Peyton will lead the Stone & Webster CM team. The project was designed by Sverdrup Civil with Hugh Caspe in charge. The proposed work shaft is not far from Perini's office. Will they be low bidder? See next issue of *Holing Through* for bid results.

(Continued on right)

*Eight Moles  
Celebrate  
Forty Years*

The following Moles elected to membership in 1956 will receive "Life" Membership effective May 1, 1996:

A. DOUGLAS BURROW spent his career with Dan Lazar at Cayuga Construction Corp. He retired in the early 70's and has lived for many years in Green Valley, Arizona.

L. GARLAND EVERIST was President of Western Contracting Corporation, Sioux City, Iowa and continues to live in that area.

ALBERT E. FORSTER was President and Chairman of Hercules Powder Company. After a long residence in Wilmington, Delaware he now lives in Westport, CT.

CHRISTOPHER J. FOSTER worked for Frederick Snare Corporation, Frederic R. Harris Inc., and Todd Shipyards before starting his consulting practice in 1948. He lives in St. Petersburg, Florida.

THOMAS G. GUERIN worked for the Arthur McMullan Company on the foundations of most of the New York City Bridges, including the George Washington Bridge. Subsequently, he worked for Tully & Di Napoli and now lives in Villanova, PA.

JOHN C. KING worked for Intrusion Prepak when he became a Mole in 1956. He then went on to a career with Masters Builders and subsequently his own consulting practice. He continues to live in Cleveland, Ohio.

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*NEWS OF MEMBERS.....*

ATKINSON CONSTRUCTION announces several changes which involve Moles' members: WARREN M. BULLOCK has retired as Vice-President of International Operations and is succeeded by BRIEN GOODALE. The major part of Brien's career was spent with Morrison Knudsen where he was President of the Construction Group.....MICHAEL R. HUIE has joined Atkinson as Boston Area Manager. Mike had been with Perini Corporation before joining Kiewit Eastern in 1989.....ARTHUR J. BLATTNER Has joined DeFoe Construction Company as Vice President, Project Management. Art returns to DeFoe after a ten year career with Perini Corporation.....DAN S. BROCK reports from Chester, Connecticut that Life Member HENRY L. SCHMECKPEPPER recently moved to Chester West Village where Dan has been living. Dan recently issued a Second Edition of his "Field Inspection Handbook"..... The January 22, 1996 issue of Forbes Magazine had an article on Mason & Hangar with a photograph of Chairman JOHN C. CUSTER. Mason & Hangar, once an active heavy construction contractor has gotten out of the construction business and has become a highly successful military contractor. A similar company is Blount, Inc. which is now solely a manufacturing company.....JAMES G. DeFALCO was recently named Vice President of Operations for Parsippay Construction Company located in Mountain Lakes New Jersey.... In the November Holing through we wrote that Nick DiMenna may have been the youngest person at age 34, to become a member of The Moles. FRED DRISCOLL wrote to say that he became a Moles' member at the age of 33. Can anybody top this? ..... JOSEPH A. HALEY has joined H.B. Zachry International as Senior Vice President.....MIKE HARATUNIAN of STV Group has been nominated to be Director of the Society of American Military Engineers...JESSE JAMESON has joined S.E. Johnson Company, Elyria, Ohio as Division Manager, Structures Division.....LAURENT J. LAVIGNE is now with LADO International, West Chester, PA.....STEPHEN PIRIGYI has been appointed Director of Sales-Northeastern Region for Manitowoc Engineering Company and will oversee sales activities for two newly appointed Manitowoc distributors.....FRANK WARREN is this year's Chairman of the National Stone Association. BOB BARTLETT is President of the Association

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EIGHT MOLES CELEBRATE 40 YEARS (continued)

EDMUND A. PRENTIS, III was the long time Secretary-Treasurer of Spencer, White & Prentis. He now lives in Delray Beach, Florida.

JACK T. WALLE has been and continues to be an active Mole for these forty years and one whom deserves special congratulations. After a distinguished military career as an engineering officer during World War II, participating in the landings at Saipan and Okinawa, Jack earned his engineering degree and went to work for Thomas Crimmins Contracting Company, where he spent his career. Jack has served The Moles as Chairman of the Program Committee, Chairman of the Publicity Committee and as Secretary. He continues to serve The Moles assisting at Students Day and at the Clambake. Thanks Jack, for everything.

## *Students Day Scheduled for April 12th*

As this issue goes to press, the Education Committee is finalizing plans for this year's Student Day which will take place on April 12th. The Committee is returning to the work underway on the 63rd Street subway extension in Queens Plaza, New York City. Considerably more work is now under way than during last year's trip. More about this in the July Holing Through.

Thanks to all the companies who contributed hard hats to this most worthy activity of The Moles.

## *ATKINSON LANDS SOME BIG JOBS*

After a long period of being a runnerup, Atkinson Construction was low bidder on two major projects last fall: a \$223.9 million dollar bid on Olmstead Lock and Dam in Olmsted, Illinois with Joint Venture Partners Dillingham and Lane and a \$384.2 million dollar bid on Domenigoni Dam in Hemet, California with Joint Venture Partners Zachry and Washington Contractors. Word is that there is another large project in the pipeline the award of which is to be announced soon. Congratulations and success to these Mole member firms on these projects.

## *Lapel Pins Available*

Lapel pins are available from The Moles office for \$15.00. Those members who have purchased them seem well stisfied.

## *BUSINESS MEETING AND DINNER MAY 1, 1996*

## **A MOMENT OF SILENCE**

WILLIAM J. HUGHES, of Hughes Brothers, Inc., died on July 30, 1995 at the age of 83. He was the third generation of the family to oversee the Hughes Marine Firms and had become a member of The Moles in 1951. His son William J. Hughes, Jr. continues to represent the firm as a member of The Moles.

The Moles' office learned of the death of JOHN C. MAXWELL in November 1995. He became a member of the Moles in 1938 and was the most senior of Moles' members at the time of his death at the age of 89. He had lived for many years in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Another long time Moles' member, WARING MIKEL, died on March 1, 1996. When he became a member of The Moles in 1947 he was employed by the Taconic State Parkway Commission. He then went on to a career with the National Park Service. He was 96 at the time of his death.

THOMAS H. O'CONNOR, JR., became a member of the Moles in 1977 at the age of 70. He was President of Thomas H. O'Connor & Co., Inc., a prominent Boston mechanical contractor. He died on August 2, 1995 at the age of 87.

PHILIP H. RECHEL spent his career with Martin Piling Company where he was President at the time of his retirement in 1988. The firm provided timber piling for projects from New England to the Philadelphia area. Phil was a very active Moles' member and attended the 1995 Moles Winter Meeting. He was 74 at the time of his death.

When he became a member of The Moles in 1961, JAMES H. RECK was with the Insurance Company of North America. He remained with the company as Director of Heavy Construction until his retirement in 1972. He continued to live in Freehold, New Jersey and had taken on a hobby of building scale models of Civil War cannons which were displayed in several museums.

## *1996 FLORIDA WINTER MEETING*



Lady Moles enjoyed golf.

Another enjoyable time was had by all who attended this years Winter Meeting at the Indian River Plantation in Stuart, Florida. Everyone had a particularly enjoyable evening at a dockside party hosted by Bill and Mona Gilfillan aboard the Dutra owned boat "Foot Loose". The weather was not as good as last year with one day of golf washed out. An Ad Hoc Committee has been appointed to consider whether there should be a 1997 Winter Meeting. Call Chairman Art Aubin with your thoughts and ideas.

## MOLES MEMBERS AID OAKPOINT RAIL LINK REDESIGN

A constructability review team which included several Moles' members played a vital role in the redesign of the Oak Point Rail Link Connection. Their efforts were instrumental in achieving a project which was both biddable and buildable.

The Oak Point Rail Link Connection is a 1.8 mile long railroad trestle along the Bronx shore of the Harlem River in New York City. It is the final segment of freight access improvements between the western United States and downstate New York and New England. It will eliminate conflicts between commuter rail and freight operations and provide vertical clearance improvements required to accommodate modern container car equipment.

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) had previously awarded a contract for the construction of the Oak Point Rail Link. That contract was ultimately terminated due to problems encountered during construction of the foundations. Berger, Lehman Associates, P.C., in association with Sidney M. Johnson Associates, was selected to



prepare revised contract documents for the completion of construction. The challenge of the redesign was to maximize the already completed construction while achieving a constructable solution. One of the most critical tasks was determining how to construct the pier foundations in difficult geological conditions.

The NYSDOT required that the redesign team include experienced construction people. Thus John W. Fowler, a marine consultant and formerly an executive of Tidewater Construction Corporation, Jerry Neumann and George Pretat of Spearin, Preston & Burrows and Louis Berger of Louis Berger International were brought on board to provide hands on input to the redesign. Having a construction contractor as part of the design team represented a landmark for the NYSDOT. The NYSDOT required that Spearin, Preston & Burrows agree not to bid the project. These members of the constructability team are long time Moles' members.

The original design included 36 inch diameter battered caissons for four legged pier foundations (quadropods) driven through a permanent steel bracing frame and socketed into bedrock. The installation of 72 inch monocaissons socketed into bedrock was also part of the original design. Rocks and boulders encountered during construction made the installation of the caissons through the bracing frame sleeves very difficult. Socketing the 72 inch caissons into the bedrock was a problem. Difficulty was encountered in effecting a seal and there was soil wash-in in the rock socket.

The redesign eliminated the requirement to batter the 36 inch caissons and relied rather on lateral earth support. Rock sockets for these caissons were eliminated by founding the caissons in the overlying

glacial till. Bracing frames were eliminated where they were not required for structural support and the number of 72 inch diameter caissons to be installed was minimized.

The constructability team made a number of recommendations including the following: a preconstruction

pile driving and load testing program to confirm the redesign and to provide additional information to bidders; that bidders be fully informed of the experience gained during the original construction program; the establishment of proper payment items to allow for the variable conditions likely to be encountered. These and other recommendations of the constructability review team were adopted by the NYSDOT.

The NYSDOT awarded a \$51 million dollar contract to John P. Picone, Inc. to complete construction and the work is nearing completion.

Thanks to Larry Lehman (a Moles' member) and to William J. Schmitz, Chief Engineer of Berger, Lehman Associates for developing this article for *Holing Through*. We encourage other Moles' members to prepare and submit similar articles for publication.



Bob Buckley, George Searle and Governor Rowland



Dick Lewis, Pat Costanzo, Dick Solari and Dave Watts,



Governor Rowland addresses the gathering.



The spouses also had a good time.

## *Governor Rowland Speaks at 1996 Award Dinner*

Connecticut Governor John G. Rowland addressed Moles' members and their guests at the 1996 Annual Award Dinner held at The New York Hilton Hotel on Wednesday evening, January 31, 1996. Governor Rowland, at 37 the youngest governor in the nation, had served three terms in the United States House of Representatives before being elected Governor in 1994. He combined humor with a serious message to hold the attention of the attendees. Many members commented afterwards that he was one of the best speakers and he warmed the hearts of many with his friendly and gracious manner.

Richard C. Solari was presented the Non Member Award by Ken Stinson of Kiewit. Solari was responsible for the tremendous growth of Granite during his reign as President and CEO. He recounted how he arranged for employee ownership of the company and subsequent public ownership.

Bob Buckley presented the Member Award to George B. Searle. After a lengthy career with S. J. Groves, George went on to establish IA Construction Corp as a major east coast contractor. George told of some of his challenging experiences both with Groves and IA to which the attendees could readily relate.

An open afternoon reception was held at The New York Hilton in the afternoon and spouses of Moles' members and their guests gathered in the evening for dinner and then went on to see the Broadway show, "Sunset Boulevard".

Everyone seemed to have a very good time. Attendance at the dinner this year was up almost a 100 from the previous year.

## *Mark Your Calendars Now 1997 Award Dinner January 29, 1997*