



SEPTEMBER, 2023

## Interview with Executive Director Dave Puza

After taking the opportunity to talk to “new” Moles Executive Director, Dave Puza (“DP”), one is left with the after-effect of his enthusiasm: the desire to get involved in The Moles. Here is just a snippet of that conversation:

*Me (Interviewer):* Time is flying! As you approach your first anniversary at the helm, tell us Dave, what has been the biggest revelation as you delve into The Moles?

*DP:* Funny you should ask! I have been immersing myself in The Moles’ history and what strikes me most is that since the beginning, The Moles has been a true source of camaraderie. We all know that this industry requires long hours and hard work that consumes so much of our waking hours. I can only imagine that back in the late 1930s and ‘40s, this job was hundred times tougher on body and soul, but you would be hard-pressed to see that on the faces peering from the photos taken at Moles events. What I saw: our industry’s own “band of brothers”, comfortable among friends who can relate to the good and meet adversity together, never grow tired of talking shop and still capable of having fun.

Over the decades, The Moles’ events have evolved with time, some becoming beloved traditions such as the Annual Clambake (*see p.3*) and the industry’s highly-respected Awards Dinner, while others were discarded due to their outdated mentality such as the bawdy Frolic. I see an organization that has not only been able to survive these past eighty-six years, but thrive, as it keeps pace with industry standards, expanding its membership in size and demographics while maintaining the integrity of the original Moles’ By-Laws and its revisions. I see our social events as a way to keep our members invested in one another and the future of our industry. One of my goals as Executive Director is to re-invigorate our 800+ members to stay engaged.

*Me: What do you have in mind?*

*DP:* For starters, I want to ensure our newer members receive the same benefits we received from interacting with the “old-timers” and motivate them to get involved early on. I have a hard time accepting passive membership.

This past June, we invited new members inducted during the past four years and members of the Executive Committee to a New Members Orientation Beefsteak Dinner. It was a great evening, where everyone mingled in a relaxed atmosphere and enjoyed delicious steak (don’t get me started on the food)! We discussed volunteer opportunities at Students Days; gave brief descriptions of standing committees’ duties and gave a shameless plug to be a technical presenter at our Spring and Fall Dinners and Winter Meeting. While I thought Mike McKenna and I came up with the beefsteak idea, The Moles actually hosted them early in the 1940s, so I especially like the connection to our early roots. Adding regional beefsteak dinners so more of our members can participate is on my “to do” list!

Our new members also have great ideas! Program Committee members Art Alzamora and Dan Peterson, both inducted in 2022, brought up the idea of hosting a Sporting Clays shooting event as a Moles Charitable Fund fundraiser. Committee Chair Nancy Vliet Cucco and a subcommittee will work with Sportsmen for Charity to bring us this exciting new event. Save the Date: June 14<sup>th</sup> at the Pawling Mountain Club in New York and get your squad of four together!

*Me: Wow, you sound motivated!*

*DP:* I am, but I feed off of others’ enthusiasm! The three upcoming Students Days are high caliber in content; we have



# Interview with Dave Puza

(con't. from page 1) members generously donating PPE; The Executive Committee has been busy updating the By-Laws and Codes of Procedure, which includes increasing the number of members serving on committees; the Publicity Committee captured some great shots at the Clambake, and the new website is scheduled to “go live” on November 1st; I am in awe of our “labour of Moles”, and I hope more Moles are inspired to participate!



On June 13th, new members were invited to



a Beefsteak Dinner where Executive Committee members provided an orientation of The Moles. Greeted by President Al Daloisio and Executive Director Dave Puza, attendees enjoyed the fare at Benjamin’s Steakhouse in White Plains, NY. While the event posed a conflict to several attending an underground industry event in Boston, a few new members left the event and drove several hours to make it. Others flew in, including Sarah Wilson, Louis Fritz and John Householder; we appreciate their efforts! *Photos l—r:* Jessica Miller, MCF Chair Jack Tobin, Dennis McNerney; Tasos Papatthanasiou, Jan Cermak; John Grillo; Education Chair Terry Flynn, Ken Prince and Ed Schluter.

## SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING ALUMNUS AND INNOVATOR

### A Leader in the Making

Raised in the Bronx and in Rutherford, New Jersey, Dick Weeks began his Rutgers journey in the fall of 1946. His goal: a degree in engineering. In addition to a demanding curriculum, Weeks found a learning environment perfectly calibrated to his competitive spirit and independent way of thinking. “If you want to succeed,” he would later say, “you have to look for top opportunities, grab hold of them, and perform.”

### Innovation and Service

After graduating from Rutgers and serving in the U.S. Air Force, Weeks joined his family’s cargo-loading business, eventually taking over as president. On his watch, Weeks Marine became an industry leader in heavy construction, dredging, tunneling, and more. Serving the greater good is embedded in the company’s values—from combatting the Deepwater Horizon oil spill to transporting the Space Shuttle *Enterprise* to its final home.

### Building a Bright Future

Weeks’ support for the School of Engineering has been transformational, exemplified in the Richard Weeks Hall of Engineering—a vibrant community hub and collaborative learning space. Weeks also established an endowed undergraduate scholarship fund for the school, the largest-ever gift of its kind to Rutgers. He is an inspiration to all who know him, showing what it means to embrace the future and change lives for the better.



## Rutgers Recognizes Dick Weeks

On September 12, 2023, Rutgers University Engineering held a celebration for their beloved alumnus Richard N. Weeks, in recognition of his many contributions to its engineering community. Several of the same Moles who attended the groundbreaking on a rainy May 6, 2016 and the building’s dedication just a short two and a half years later in the midst of a blizzard in 2018, were again on hand to join Dick in this celebration. As many who spoke fondly of Dick attested, the Hall has become a prominent place on the Busch campus, not only for its state-of-the-art labs, but as a place of refuge for bleary-eyed engineering students.

The panel prominently displayed in the Hall, and shown *at left*, memorializes Dick’s legacy of selflessness and serves as an inspiration to us all. *Below:* Joel Moskowitz; John Kolaya, Jack Tobin, Dave Puza, Richard S. Weeks, Eugene Kelley and Thomas Groark. Seated: Dick Weeks



# Clambake: August 22, 2023

Once again, everything aligned this year to make for a great day among friends! With the colorful array of classic cars gracing the front lawn, the lively card tournaments underway all afternoon, the ever-plentiful food choices and a “top ten” summer day, all could agree the day was perfect! Program Chair Nancy Vliet Cucco worked with Dave Puza and committee members to ensure the day was memorable and we thank Bob Radske, Mike Chow and Joe Sopko from the Publicity Committee for capturing the day.

We were back to our pre-Covid numbers of attendees, who were greeted at registration with distressed, trucker-style baseball caps in Moles-inspired brown. While the modern style was a big hit, those preferring a more traditional cap were happy to see a choice was offered. Even the staff at the NYAC were eager to get one!

So much food, so little time! New this year was separating the raw bar from the lunch menu and serving it in late afternoon, allowing the 96 golfers returning from Pelham Country Club and other late arrivals to partake in what equated to a feast of clams, oysters, mussels, ribs, chicken and shrimp tacos! Not everyone paced themselves for the delicious dinner offerings of salmon and prime rib. While seating was available both indoors and outdoors for dinner, most opted to enjoy the water-side outdoor tents that gave meals a festive beer hall atmosphere.

This year’s Clambake also served double-duty as a business meeting and Moles in attendance were directed to vote on changes to The Moles’ By-Laws. President Al Daloisio

manned the voting table and searched the grounds ensuring votes were cast. One hundred forty-nine affirmative votes were received, finalizing the unanimous approval of the By-Laws’ revisions. But the number begs the question, where were all The Moles this year?!

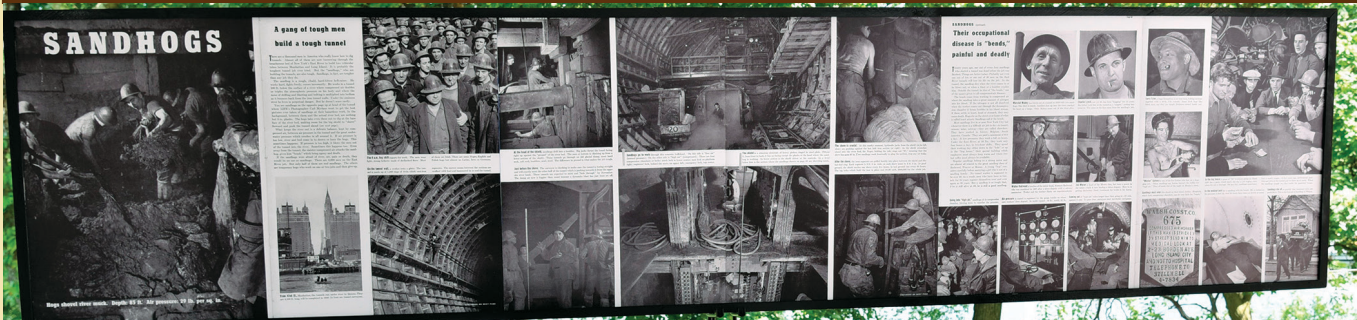
Based on the cheers resounding from various outdoor locations throughout the day, we are not sure who had the most fun! The tournament-style Texas Hold ‘Em and Black Jack games benefitting the Moles Charitable Fund culminated in championship rounds in-late afternoon; Jenga players put their engineering and construction know-how to the test; corn-hole was a popular choice as were the cigars offered by NYC-based Martinez Cigars and new member Dennis Mc Nerney was the lucky ticket holder for the Wheel of Fortune! Mulligans were offered to golfers this year for the first time, raising over \$1500 for the Moles Charitable Fund!

We thank Chris Adams and his son for setting up their cars, including the beautiful Duesenberg, so early that morning that they were corralled to help set up. Rich France did a fantastic job with “Mole Motors”, setting up posters highlighting members’ favorite cars and organizing the cars on display, including Chase DeRose’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Corvette and Jesse Jameson’s Hudson, among others.

If you missed out this year, mark your calendars! The Moles will return to the NYAC next **August 20, 2024**, hoping to experience the same light breeze off the sound and what many referred to as “the best weather ever”.



The April 3, 1939 *Life* article on Sandhogs (seen below) made for an interesting display!



# Clambake 2023 in Pictures

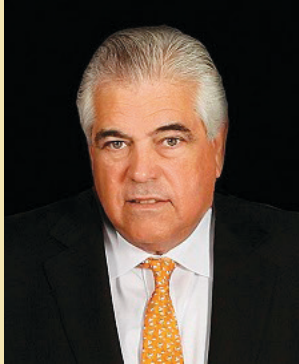


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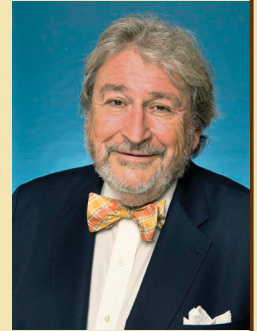
# With our Deepest Sympathy...

Life Member **Neal R. Friets** passed away on July 24, 2023, the day before his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Neal graduated from Yale University with the Degrees of Bachelor and Master of Engineering. After three years in the Civil Engineer Corps of the United States Navy, Neal spent his entire career with the Kiewit Corporation, working at and supervising construction projects in Greenland and the United States, then managing their Eastern Marine District. Retiring in 1982, he and his wife Joan enjoyed traveling the world. In addition to Joan, Neal leaves behind four children and their families.

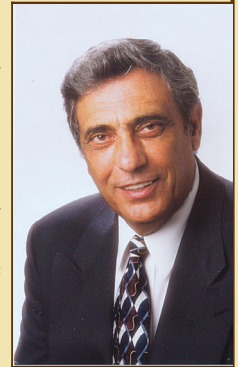
Twenty-five year Member **Juan Gutierrez** passed away on July 30, 2023. Born in Cuba in 1948, Juan migrated to the US at age 13, arriving in New York as part of "Operation Pedro Pan" and lived with relatives until his parents and young brother arrived in 1966 via the Freedom Flights. Juan attended Newark College of Engineering, then worked for the City of Paterson before joining Cruz Construction Company in 1971. In 1978, Juan founded Northeast Construction, focusing on sewer and water pipeline work in NJ. Over the years, the company, now JAG Companies, Inc. acquired Remsco Construction, Caldwell Marine International and the Texas-based Huxted Trenchless. Juan served as past President and Executive Board Member of the Utility and Transportation Contractors Association of NJ and was active in the National Utility Contractors Association; The General Contractors of New York; and Cuban American National Foundation. He leaves behind his wife Marta, five children, including Moles member Roly Acosta, and their families.



Dr. **Michael Horodniceanu** passed away on June 22, 2023 due to pancreatic cancer. Born in Bucharest, Romania, Michael moved to Israel, where he obtained his BSCE. In 1970, Michael immigrated to New York City and began his career with Berger-Lehman. Michael received an M.Sc in Engineering Management from Columbia and his Ph.D in Transportation Planning and Engineering. Michael applied his knowledge as traffic commissioner of NYC; at the traffic engineering firm Urbitran; as President of MTA Capital Construction, where he oversaw several mega-projects, including East Side Access, Second Avenue Subway, No. 7 Line Extension and the Fulton Transit Center, and as professor at NYU Tandon School of Engineering and Manhattan College. To say that Michael made an impact on New York City would be an understatement.



**Joseph A. "Joe" Ferrara** passed away August 5, 2023. Born in Brooklyn in 1936, Joe proudly served in the U.S. Army before joining his father in the workforce. In 1969, Joe and his four younger brothers founded Ferrara Bros. Building Materials Corp, which grew to become one of the largest, and highly respected, concrete producers in NYC, integral to the construction of many major projects, including Second Ave. Subway, Citifield, and the new LGA Airport. Joe was active in The Moles and we will miss his presence at future Clambakes, Annual Awards dinners and Winter Meetings. Joe will be remembered for his love of family (son Joe J. became a Moles Member in 2019) and his philanthropy, including his invaluable contribution to Jamaica Hospital Medical Center.



## Winter Meeting March 7–10, 2024!

**El Conquistador, Fajardo, Puerto Rico**

**M**oles will be returning to the El Conquistador in Fajardo, Puerto Rico for Winter Meeting 2024! The venue is beautiful and the island offers a plethora of activities! The dates this year coincide with National Women in Construction Week and the Program Committee is planning a suitable event recognizing the nearly three decades since the first two women, Priscilla Nelson and Lois Glasgow, were inducted into The Moles in 1995. We are also looking for a technical presentation; if anyone is interested, please contact Dave Puza. Make your hotel reservations today by calling the hotel directly: (787) 863-1000 x 7354; refer to The Moles.

Details including hotel rates (good through Feb. 6, 2024 based on availability) and planned events are available on the website, [www.themoles.net](http://www.themoles.net) under the Calendar Events Page.



# New & Improved Website Coming!

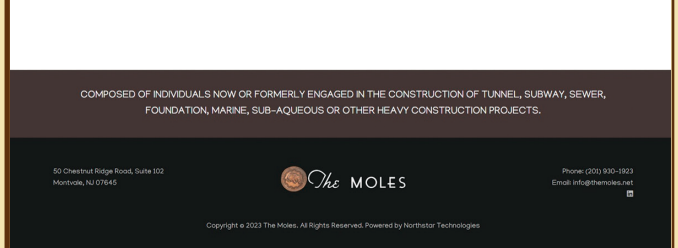
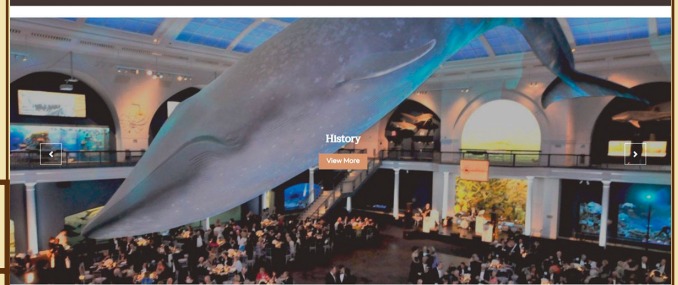
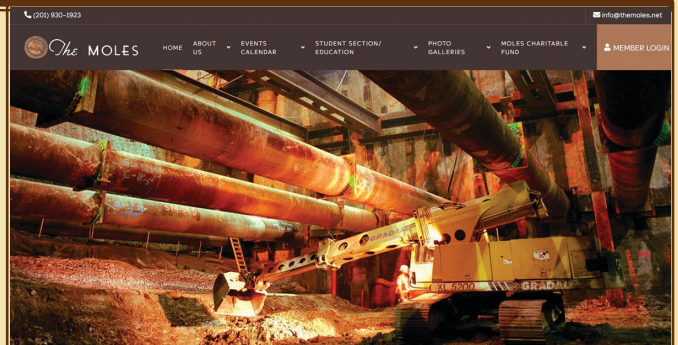
The Moles website is getting a facelift and added functionality! New features will include the ability to pay for annual dues and all events, not just the Clambake and Awards Dinner! Students will be able to submit their resumes and cover letters in addition to reviewing available internships while members will be able to submit internship opportunities *and* make a request to obtain students' internship applications. Members will have easy access to both the current issue of *Holing Through*, as well as past editions.

The Calendar of Events will be more dynamic and we hope members will find navigating the website to be user-friendly. In order to maintain members' privacy, a log-in will still be required in order to gain access to members-only information. Additional details will be forthcoming!

**WANTED:** Fantastic photos of Members' projects! There are only so many times the iconic photo of the Hoover Dam can be used! Iconic, yes, but we really want to showcase our members' engineering and construction achievements and we need your help. Please send/share your amazing, Hi-Res, non-copyrighted, landscape-oriented photos Heidi Taber at [htaber@themoles.net](mailto:htaber@themoles.net) and we will include them on a banner, rotating out periodically.

The "Go Live" date is November 1st; of course, the current website is still being used until then.

At right, a sneak peak at the new website's home page!



## Upcoming Events

**Wednesday, November 8, 2023**  
Annual Fall Business Meeting & Dinner

**Thursday, February 8, 2024**  
Moles Annual Awards Dinner  
New York Hilton Midtown

**March 7-10, 2024**  
Moles Winter Meeting  
El Conquistador Resort, Fajardo, Puerto Rico

**Friday, March 15, 2024**  
St. Patrick's Scholarship Luncheon (Mike McHugh)

**Thursday, May 2, 2024**  
Spring Members' Dinner and Annual Business Meeting  
New Moles Orientation Luncheon  
Technical Presentation: Perini presents the Henry Hudson Bridge Project  
\*\*\* **New Location: Marriott Marquis @ Time Square**

**Friday, June 14, 2024**  
NEW!!! Moles' Sporting Clays Event benefitting the MCF

**Tuesday, August 20, 2024**  
The Moles' Annual Clambake  
New York Athletic Club, Pelham, NY

**Thursday, November 7, 2024**  
Fall Members' Dinner  
\*\*\* **New Location: Marriott Marquis @ Time Square**

**Wednesday, January 8, 2025**  
Moles Annual Awards Dinner  
\*\*\* **New Location: Marriott Marquis @ Time Square**

## Fall Students Days!!!

The Education Subcommittees are extremely busy with three upcoming Students Days:

Westborough, MA: MASSDOT I495/90 Project on Sept 29  
Harrison, NJ: NJ Transit Portal North Bridge on October 20  
Alexandria, VA: AlexRenew Project on November 3

Thank you to those who have donated PPE! We are still in need of cut level 3 gloves and protective eyewear for October 20<sup>th</sup> and November 3<sup>rd</sup> and we can always use more hard hats and vests!

Volunteers are needed at the NJ and Alexandria, VA Students Days - Email Heidi Taber at [htaber@themoles.net](mailto:htaber@themoles.net) for more information!