

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

As our 100th anniversary celebration continues, GU is participating in or sponsoring the following events and activities for our business and residential customers (check [www.grotonutilities.com](http://www.grotonutilities.com) for full details). We hope you are able to join us!

**7/16/04, 8/1/04, 8/13/04 and 8/22/04**  
Centennial Concerts in Washington Park

**8/6/04**  
Groton City Day celebration

**8/18/04**  
Key Business Customer Luncheon with state and local government officials

**8/21/04**  
Groton Utilities Community Picnic at Groton Utilities' Operations Complex

**Public Power Week – 10/03/04 – 10/09/04**  
Customer Service Appreciation Week

**10/6/04**  
Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut, Inc.  
Business After Hours

**12/4/04**  
Groton Holiday Parade

In our Fall newsletter, look for photos of other events sponsored by GU including the Airfest celebration at Groton-New London Airport and the Centennial Concert in Washington Park.



*Local children gathered up eggs during the Annual City of Groton Easter Egg Hunt held at the Municipal Building last April.*

## **HOT DOGS AND CAKE ON US!**

On August 21, GU will host a community picnic at our Operations Complex on Poquonnock Rd. to celebrate our 100th Anniversary. We will provide free food, drinks, entertainment, door prizes, activities for kids and families – and more. The “official birthday party” picnic will be held from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., rain or shine. **SEE YOU THERE!**



**GROTON UTILITIES**

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**Special Series of Publications Commemorating 100 Years of Community Service.**

## GU's History, 1934 - 1964 Years of Change, Challenge, and Growth



Early on, GU workers regularly made repairs and improvements to the city's water lines, as seen here in this 1950s photo.

maintained its focus of providing reliable power and water service with the highest standards in customer service.

Through these early years, the Borough of Groton remained primarily a residential community, and so GU focused mostly on this part of its business. A few major business accounts included the Navy and the New London Ship and Engine Company. During this time, the demand for water did not exceed 1 million gallons per day, and the demand for electrical services did not exceed 1600 kilowatts annually.

In September 1938, GU – and all of Southern New England – faced the worst hurricane in the history of the state. The hurricane (which went basically unpredicted) caused winds of up to 150 miles per hour, floods, fires, and tidal waves. Nearly 700 people were killed throughout the region, 275 million trees were knocked down, and 20,000 miles of electric power and telephone lines were downed. GU's crews worked tirelessly, day and night, to restore power to its customers and to maintain its water quality. It was a great test for GU – and showed how the company worked together to overcome this dire emergency.

The years following the hurricane brought many changes and much growth at GU – and the area. In 1939, the company built the "Unit 1" water filter plant with a 2 million-gallon daily capacity; and added a half-million-gallon clear well. This helped the company meet the rapidly growing demand from the U.S. Naval Submarine Base during World War II. This increased water capacity also helped draw the Chas. Pfizer and



GROTON UTILITIES

*We're pleased to present this second issue of a special series of newsletters documenting the 100-year history of Groton Utilities. This issue focuses on the company's history from 1934-1964. Our fall issue will focus on 1964-1994; and our final issue in the winter of 2005 will take a look at 1994-2004.*

*We hope you enjoy this look back at our "Early Connections."*

The 100th anniversary celebration is in full swing at Groton Utilities, as we continue our look back on the company's history. In our first newsletter, we reviewed our very early beginnings – starting with our founding in 1904 up through the year 1934. These were the decades when we planted our roots in the Borough of Groton.

This article focuses on the years 1934-1964, which were years of great change and challenge for Groton Utilities, the Borough of Groton, and the nation. Through it all, GU

(continued on page 2)

# Director's Message: *Great Customer Service Is Our Backbone*

**F**OR 100 YEARS, Groton Utilities has developed and strongly maintained a high level of personalized customer service. A recent survey of our residential and business customers confirms we have succeeded . . . but service is a never-ending obsession!

While we are grateful our customers recognize the steps we take to keep them satisfied, we cannot rest on our laurels. There's



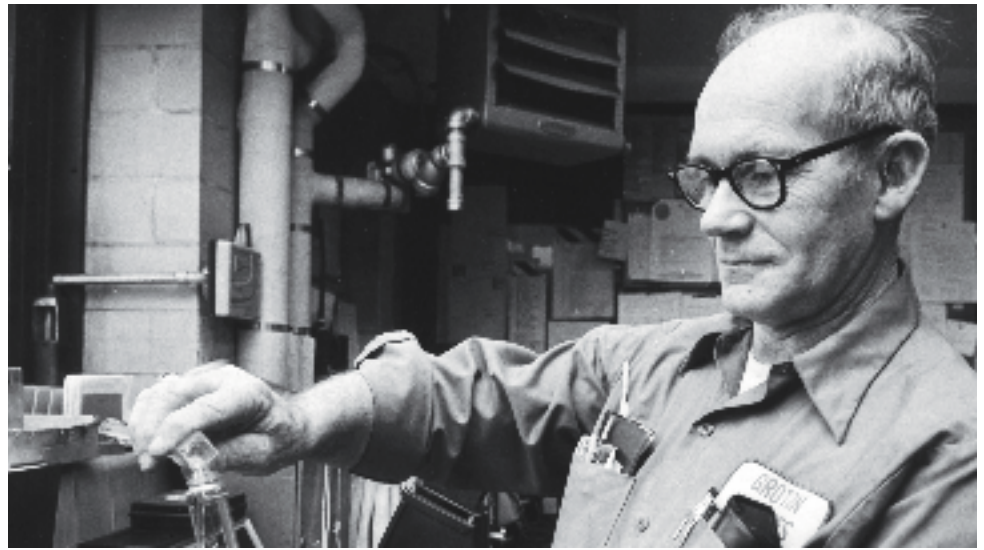
always more to do – especially as we expand into offering new services to our customers.

As you'll see in this newsletter, customer service is a pillar of our company's history. It was how we made "early connections" with our business and residential customers, and it is an integral part of our future. This 100-year anniversary celebration is really a continuation of our belief in customer service . . . the reason we have lasted for one century. And it will be the only reason we survive the next 100!

As our year-long celebration continues, we remind you to keep an eye on our calendar of events, found here and on [www.grotonutilities.com](http://www.grotonutilities.com). We hope you join in the celebrations – most especially our community picnic which will be held on August 21 at the Groton Utilities Operations Complex on Poquonnock Rd.

Thank you for all of your tremendous support and for allowing us to be "At Your Service."

Sincerely,  
Glenn M. Wilson, *Director of Utilities*



**WHEN OSCAR BJORK SERVED AS GU'S WATER TREATMENT PLANT OPERATOR**, there were no computers, cell phones or faxes, and the industry was primarily self-regulated. Oscar was intimately involved in every aspect of the water safety process – relying on personal communication and training to handle all situations. He conducted weekly water quality tests by hand (as pictured here in a 1983 photo taken in the lab), personally dealt with emergency phone calls, collected data for the region's weather station which was located at the GU plant – and more. Oscar believed "personal dedication of any plant operator is essential to the quality of water – and life – for the community." Oscar's dedication to the community went beyond his demanding job at GU. He took out a loan against his home to help purchase two new ambulances and create the Groton Ambulance Association in 1954 – a service that is still in operation today. He made a strong impact on GU during his 30-year career, and his civic attitude helped make Groton the special community it is today.

## Change, Challenge, and Growth *(cont. from page 1)*

Company, Inc. manufacturing plant to the area in 1942. To meet further demand, GU built its "Unit II" water filters in 1948, allowing for a 4 million-gallon daily capacity

During this time, GU began to provide electric service to the U.S. Coast Guard Station in Groton, which was located at the former Morgan F. Plant property on Avery Point. Additionally, in 1951, the company began service to Electric Boat Corporation, builder of the USS Nautilus, the world's first nuclear-powered submarine (launched in 1954). GU also finalized electric service contract negotiations for the U.S. Naval Submarine Base in 1953. (It wasn't until 1964 that GU signed its first water contract with the Sub Base.)

As part of its agreement to increase daily water supply to Pfizer, GU dammed Great Brook to create Ledyard Reservoir in 1954. This increased capacity to 6,000,000 gallons of water per day to meet their manufacturing needs – and still service other residential and business customers.

Further improvements were made in the 1960s when GU increased the Unit II

water filters to 6 million-gallon daily capacity, and when the company built the Buddington Substation to receive all electricity delivered to GU. These updates made operations smoother, more controllable, and more reliable for the company.

Changes were happening in the residential part of GU's business as well during this time. In June of 1961, the company signed a water supply agreement to serve Groton Long Point – which is still in effect today. Additionally, the company signed its first water supply agreement to serve Noank Fire District in March of 1962.

In 1964, the Borough of Groton changed its name to the City of Groton and a new era began for the region and the company. In our next newsletter, we'll take a look at Groton Utilities in the last part of the century – how it faced the energy crisis in the 1970s and the decline in demand from Pfizer; how it expanded services, and how it maintained its focus on customer satisfaction through more challenging times.

## 75 Years with The Groton-New London Airport

THE GROTON-NEW LONDON AIRPORT is a fixture in the Groton area, celebrating 75 years as a vibrant multi-use airport. Throughout those years, Groton Utilities has provided electricity needed for runway lighting, terminal computers, communications, maintenance and expansion, and general operations. And, GU has provided water capabilities for everyday and emergency use – playing a small role in the safety of each plane's take off and landing.

Originally called Trumbull Airport, the airport was the first established by the State of Connecticut in 1929. It was taken over by the United States Navy during World War II and was returned to the state in 1946. In 1980, the name changed to Groton-New London Airport and today is one of two state-owned airports.

The airport has recently undergone extensive renovations to the passenger terminal and improvements to its campus. "As we upgrade the airport and construct two new hangars, GU has been on hand to address issues concerning water or electrical service," Ms. Catherine Young, airport manager, said. "They helped us coordinate the location and installation of underground electrical facilities, which kept our work environment safe and our project on schedule."

GU maintains all fire hydrants at the facility, and continuously reviews the airport's extensive emergency plans so it can respond quickly and efficiently in any type of emergency.

"On the few occasions we have lost power, GU has restored services almost immediately," Ms. Young said. "And, GU always keeps us up to speed on any problems they may encounter during bad weather so we can alert plane operators and passengers."

Ms. Young said the personal relationship GU has maintained with the airport over the years is a significant benefit to the airport, its customers, and the community in general.

GU congratulates Groton-New London Airport for 75 years in service – and looks forward to being a key "partner" with them well into the future.

## PROFILE:

### Mr. Julio Leandri, Former Manager of Utilities *For 57 Years, Still Playing a Role in Utilities Industry*

**A**S A CHILD, Julio Leandri would go down to Groton Utilities, then located on Thames Street, to pay the light bill with his parents. He would marvel at the workers there. Everyone was always nice, efficient, and concerned about keeping "happy customers." He knew he was at a special place.

And, he knew if you had a job at GU, you were a "big shot." That's why it was such a thrill and accomplishment for him to get his first job at GU while he was still a college student. And, that's why it was an even bigger triumph to have a career there that spanned nearly 40 years.

In 1947, while an engineering and industrial management student at the University of Connecticut, Mr. Leandri began to work at GU. During holidays, vacations and on weekends, he made maps of the streets and houses located in the Borough of Groton.

After serving in Germany and France as a U.S. Army Reserve logistics officer for two years, Mr. Leandri returned to Groton to become a full-time employee at GU. His first role was as an engineer, and then he moved into the business arena of the company. He eventually became GU's Business Manager and then Manager of Utilities – a position he held until his retirement in 1985.

Mr. Leandri was involved in meeting the challenges associated with the expansion of Pfizer and Electric Boat, which happened around the same time. The company took necessary steps to meet supply and get power at cost below anyone around to sell at low prices to all of its customers.

Mr. Leandri has seen great changes in GU over the years – from changes in equipment, tools, and trucks, to the addition of new reservoirs, to the changing needs of business customers. But, he feels the important things have stayed the same: GU remains a great asset to the city, keeping taxes low for the citizens, adding to the city budget, giving customers reliable water and power.



"Groton Utilities started out as a relatively small community service, but was a special endeavor from the beginning," Mr. Leandri says. "In addition to providing a vital service to the community, GU was a great work environment. Everyone seemed to love going to work, and everyone did what it took to keep the utilities up and running – even during storms or other emergencies."

Mr. Leandri feels the people who work at GU have an incredible service-oriented attitude and philosophy – it's something that is instilled in the company from management on down. He says all of GU's endeavors automatically have a great advantage – a strong reputation among customers for quality and service.

Although Mr. Leandri is now "retired," he is still heavily involved in the utilities industry. In 1987, he was appointed as a Utilities Commissioner for the City of Groton, and still serves in that role today. And he serves as chairman of the Board of Directors of Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative (CMEEC), an electric purchasing organization he helped create with GU's former director of utilities, Mr. William Clinton, and other prominent members of the utilities industry.

Although his work with CMEEC and the commission keeps him busy, Mr. Leandri still enjoys everything the city of Groton has to offer – a vibrant community, beautiful places like Eastern Point, and a great network of family and friends. "It's the best place to be," he says.