

Member Profile: Gabriel Varga of Blueskies Construction and Design

'Go Green' and the sky's the limit!

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

"The sky's the limit...."

It's an old saying, but a new company that personifies it can be an inspiration to aspiring and established contractors alike. And inspiring is one word to describe Blueskies Construction & Design LLC., one of the Rhode Island Builders Association's newest members.

"I think we're blazing some new trails," states Blueskies owner Gabriel Varga, a 2002 engineering graduate of the University of Rhode Island, who has a nearly 20-year background as a construction manager. "We are definitely a 'green' company."

In fact, Blueskies is the successor to his first company, G3 Construction LLC, which Gabriel ran from 1999-2009. The "G3" was shorthand for "green growth general" contractors, and Gabriel, a native of Costa Rica, says it was the first completely environmentally friendly construction firm in Rhode Island and one of the first in New England.

"We sought to minimize the impact of every project," Gabriel emphasizes.

Then and now, depending on what clients want, he uses recycled building materials when possible, concrete with ash and stones, and tries to minimize VOCs (volatile organic compounds).

Gabriel expanded on his construction-manager experience with Greater Elmwood Neighborhood Services (GENS), where he created two projects that won awards, one for historic preservation and another for green construction. As a construction manager for Stop & Shop, Gabriel was in charge of a \$4.5 million project,



Gabriel, Ira and son Isaac Varga at the RIBA Clambake on August 7th.

installing solar panels at four of the company's buildings.

"In the end, it's the client who decides what they want to follow, so some projects might not be as green as I would like them to be," he points out. "But I've been involved in many interesting projects, and I decided to apply these experiences and methods with a new company."

The result was Blueskies, founded in 2013 and not fully under way until this year. It's a family business too, with Gabriel's wife, Ira, managing the office while he works in the field with clients and subcontractors.

"I still concentrate on construction management, supervising the sites, working with budgets and architects," he says.

Blueskies divides its work just about evenly between commercial and residential jobs, including a great deal of renovation. The company ranges around New England.

"I try to apply the best aspects of commercial work to residential jobs, using more specialized people in each field, a faster track and more accurate completion times. Things change, especially with renovations. But we


stay on budget and on time."

Currently, the company is working on projects in Watertown and Newton, Mass., along with a hotel renovation in Connecticut. Past projects have included work on historic restorations with the Providence Preservation Society, work with container housing and creativity with different roof styles.

Blueskies is a registered minority company, and Gabriel belongs to several Latino business associations. The company joined RIBA in May.

"We often hear negative views of what's happening in Rhode Island," Gabriel notes. "But I see a lot of things changing for our industry. One of the biggest issues has been untrained contractors, and RIBA has worked successfully for the new rules that require continuing education."

Along with RIBA's advocacy and education, Gabriel values the association's networking opportunities. He and Ira, a native of the Netherlands, are becoming familiar faces at RIBA social events.

"Truly, the sky is the limit for Blueskies!" Gabriel says. 

Blueskies Construction & Design LLC.

President: Gabriel Varga

RIBA member since: 2015

Focus: Green building and remodeling

Serves: New England

Founded: 2013

Based: Providence, Rhode Island