

CONSTRUCTION LABOR SERVICES, INC

THE

# CONNECTION

November 2007

## *A New Spin on Holiday Giving*

For many people, the holidays are a joyous time to get together with family, exchange gifts, and eat great food. But sometimes, amidst these gatherings, we tend to overlook those less fortunate. One way to help those in need is to change your thinking from how much you can get to how much you can give. Here are some great ways to spread some cheer this holiday season:

**VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME.** Most people get together with family and friends for a big holiday meal. This year, why not use the money you would normally spend on your holiday meal to buy food for the local food bank or soup kitchen, and then spend your mealtime serving the food.

**MAKE A DONATION IN SOMEONE'S NAME.** There are many charities that offer a holiday service in which you can make a donation in someone's name.

**ADOPT AN INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY.** There are several organizations that exist to provide fun gifts and necessities for individuals and entire families during the holidays.

**DONATE CHILDREN'S TOY.** Chances are your children have some gently used toys they could donate to a local cause that will distribute them to children. You could also take your children to the store and have them pick out a toy they would like to donate.

**DONATE ADULT ITEMS, TOO.** Cleaning out your tool shed, sewing room, or garage may reveal

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## CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

### MILLER-DAVIS DONATES PROJECT PHOTOS

Librarians are digitally scanning and cataloguing six bankers boxes worth of photos of buildings Miller-Davis constructed over the past 98 years. And there are more to come. "Since the day that we formally gave the pictures to the library, we found three file cabinets more full of photos," said Miller-Davis president Rex Bell.

"Years ago, in the fifties and sixties, for example, it was very common for construction projects to require professional photos to be taken every month - progress photos," Bell continued. "So we had just a gazillion photographs."

The gift, announced in late September, is the largest single photographic donation of its kind the Kalamazoo Public Library yet has received, according to the library's local history specialist, Beth Timmerman.

"For us, we feel it's important because it's setting an example for other organizations that might have a collection like this, that they (the pictures) be preserved and made available to the public," Timmerman.

Potential donors would not be losing their own histories, she explained. When the digital scanning is completed, the library will give Miller-Davis copies of the original photos. Other donors also would get digital versions back.

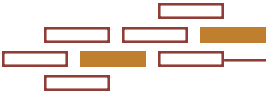
They always say a picture is worth 1,000 words - sometimes a picture tells you 1,000 words," observed Lynn Houghton, a Kalamazoo historian who teaches Michigan History at Western Michigan University, and co-wrote the book Kalamazoo Lost and Found.

The photographic collection documents not only all the buildings Miller-Davis constructed, it also shows how people lived at the time each of the buildings was built, Houghton said. Little details, such as the cars on the street, the clothing people walking by were wearing, and similar items are obvious. But the construction records tell more.

"Around the turn of the 20th century, a multiple story building downtown may have been filled with doctors, dentists, lawyers," Houghton said. "Back then, people came downtown for a lot of things.

In Kalamazoo, as in a lot of Midwest cities, we were a vertical city. The thing that happened in so many communities in the Midwest, especially after World War II, cities became horizontal.

The Miller-Davis collection shows us the way we lived and how things have changed, and not just in Kalamazoo, but where ever they built buildings.



Pfizer, Inc. last year donated a large collection of documents and artifacts from the Upjohn Co. to the Kalamazoo Valley Museum and the archives at WMU, Houghton said. That was very lucky for the public collections because Upjohn materials were scattered over various places, she said.

Too often photos are lost or discarded when a company is acquired by a buyer outside the local area, just because the acquiring company doesn't know who to contact, Houghton said.

Bell saw another side of community life documented in the photos.

"I think what's unique is there is a commitment of local owners, local business people, to construction downtown in Kalamazoo," Bell said. Which I think is almost inordinate for the size of the town. It's gone on for generations."

Business Review Western Michigan  
Nov. 22-28, 2007



1931 exterior shot of Kalamazoo City Hall from the collection of construction photographs that Miller-Davis donated.

We welcome your comments and suggestions about the Connection. To submit articles and/or topic ideas, please call: (269) 629-9708 or send to P.O. Box 460, Richland, MI 49083. Also visit our website at: [www.CLS-Skilledlabor.com](http://www.CLS-Skilledlabor.com)



(A NEW SPIN CONT.)

some items that could be useful to someone in need.

**INCLUDE THOSE THAT ARE ALONE.** Why not invite someone that would be alone to enjoy some of the holiday festivities with you and your family? While doing this may be outside your comfort zone, the warmth you display by opening your home is a priceless gift.

**Consider all the ways that you can help others - don't underestimate the profound impact that your giving can have on others this holiday season.**

Progress Notes November 2007



## Staying on the Safe Side of Crane Booms and Buckets

When you're busy doing your job down on the ground, it's easy to forget what's going on overhead. But as a competent construction worker you must know what's going on all around you, including up above. In an accident involving a crane boom, the victim is not likely to have a chance to learn from.

The rule of thumb for working around cranes is simple: stay out from under crane booms, buckets, or suspended loads. This applies whether you are working, walking through, or just standing around. And if you're going to be anywhere near a crane operation, you must wear a hard hat.

Using a crane requires planning: cranes must be positioned so that the boom or bucket won't be swung over workers. It may be necessary to have workers leave the area during the operation or schedule the operation for a time when workers aren't around. On a busy job site, the swing area should be roped off or barricaded and clearly marked with warning signs. A traffic controller should be posted on crowded sites.

Beware of falling material or concrete. A chunk of half hard material from a concrete operation is the most common spill from a bucket and the most frequently cause of crane accidents. A hard hat is poor protection from falling concrete. Stay well in the clear, both when the bucket is landing and when it is lifting away.

You take pride in doing your job quickly and efficiently. Because crane booms are usually so far away - way up there - it's tempting to trust in luck in order to get your work done. Resist the temptation. You're much too valuable to take a chance with your life.