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Raven Hill Discovery Center, incorporated in 1991, is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation.

Mission: Raven Hill provides a place that enhances hands-on and lifelong learning for all ages by connecting science, history & the arts.

To: Friends and Family everywhere
From: Cheri and Raven Hill
Date: April 18, 2021
Re: Weekly Update

Greetings Everyone!

In anticipation of reopening, I took two naval uniforms to Bradford's Master Dry Cleaners in Petoskey to be evaluated. The staff there was very helpful and I left the old uniforms in their capable hands. A couple of weeks later, I got a call from Bryan Bradford and he couldn't contain his excitement. In cleaning the World War II (WWII) hat, they found a sweetheart picture tucked inside the hat in a plastic sleeve made expressly for that purpose. I picked up the uniforms this week and they are now on display at the Center.



(Far left) Sweetheart picture found in the plastic sleeve (Middle picture) inside the World War II navy hat (Above). Check out how we used a mirror to allow visitors to see the picture in place inside the hat.

Every day, we learn more about the uniforms and the men who wore them. This week's update is a tale of two sailors. Born two generations apart, Prescott Arthur Leach and Charles Arthur Brizee both served their country as sailors in the navy. Prescott was co-founder, Tim Leach's great grandfather. Charles (Chuck) was Tim's uncle and Chuck's sweetheart was Tim's Aunt Bev. All three played a big part in Tim's life growing up and they continue to play a teaching role at Raven Hill, encouraging visitors to use their powers of observation.

Prescott Arthur Leach was born in 1871 and entered the navy before he turned 16. He served during the Spanish American War. During his 21 years in the navy, Leach was a Seaman First Class (SFC) and served in the medical corps on the USS San Francisco, the USS Yosemite; the USS Vermont and the USS Franklin. He left the navy in 1908. During WWII, he made ammunition as part of the war effort.

Charles Arthur (Chuck) Brizee enlisted in the navy in 1940 and was assigned to the USS Nevada. His rank was Fire Control 2 (FC2), a highly technical position responsible for naval gunfire support and surface combat, as well as anti-aircraft warfare. Chuck was on board the USS Nevada, when it was bombed at Pearl Harbor. He was later attached to the USS St. Louis. After submarine training in 1944, Chuck volunteered for sub duty.

The two uniforms are similar in many ways. Both sailor suits are classic navy blue. The shirts are wool pullovers with square tar-flap collars, each sporting 3 stripes and 2 stars. The trousers are bell-bottoms and decorated at the waist in front with the standard 13 buttons. However, the length of the pullovers and the position of the insignias is different on the two uniforms. The hats differ in size and decoration.



Uncle Chuck's neckerchief is rolled diagonally and tied in a square knot. It was used as a sweat rag, when needed. Do you know how to roll on the diagonal? Can you tie a square knot?



Leach's hat sports metal letters on the brimless band that spell out the name of his ship. A photo of Great grandfather's first ship, the USS San Francisco, is part of the display.



Great grandfather Leach actually did some of the sewing & embroidery on his uniform in 1894, while on a European cruise aboard the old USS San Francisco.

Make sure you take a look at all the intricate detail on Leach's uniform and hat! It was a way to keep busy on the long voyages at sea.

The two naval uniforms are being featured as part of the Smithsonian ***Labor Days History of Work*** exhibit opening on Saturday, August 14 and running through Thursday, September 30 of 2021. One section of the ***Labor Days*** exhibit is devoted to **"What we wear"**.

Our official re-opening was yesterday, April 17th! The Center is now open Saturdays from noon to 4pm and Sundays from 2 to 4pm and other times by appointment. Visitors are asked to call 231.536.3369 and make an appointment to visit, as the number of guests indoors is limited. The Center plans to be open daily after Memorial Day: 10am to 4pm on weekdays, plus the weekend hours. If you take a chance and just show up, know that you might be asked to explore outdoors and wait for your turn to come inside. **Plus**, we have figured out a way to stay socially distanced AND allow most visitors to touch or hold Checkers, the corn snake and Spike, the bearded dragon! Of course, everything depends on the pandemic.

For a preview of the "new" Raven Hill, tune in to TV 9&10's "Michigan This Morning" show on Tuesday, April 20th. Gabriella and Stephanie will be here checking everything out!

Please do your part to fight the coronavirus & variants. Get vaccinated, wash your hands, wear your mask, socially distance & stay away from crowds. We want to see you here soon, enjoying our new exhibits, both indoors and outside. Take care of yourselves,

Cherí