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*Raven Hill Discovery Center 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: November 14, 2020  
Re: News from Raven Hill!

Hi, Everyone!

As I write this on Friday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, I am reminded of the fun our family had on this “holiday”. My dad was magnanimous in his offer to do the dishes every Friday, the 13<sup>th</sup>. Boy, did we make sure he kept his word. On some occasions, Dad got creative and would enlist help from Bill Bopp, his good friend and “partner in crime”. He and Bill would load the dirty dishes into laundry baskets, take them next door and use the Bopp’s dishwasher to “wash” the dishes. Great memories of times past!



My Dad, Dean T Culver, MD

This week at Raven Hill, I took advantage of the warm, sunny weather to post “No Hunting” signs. As I hiked the perimeter of the property at a reduced speed, stopping periodically to put up a sign, I noticed a couple of things. First, I definitely need to return and pick up all the trash that has accumulated along the roads. Second, and much more fascinating, was a cluster of trees at the south end of the Ancient World. Several trees had a woody vine crawling around and spiraling up their trunks. Does anyone recognize this vine or will I have to wait until it leafs out next summer to try making an identification?



Strangler figs are native to Florida and other tropical & subtropical areas. They strangle their host tree, growing down into the roots and robbing their host of water and nutrients, as well as growing up to reach the sunlight above the tree canopy.

Photo by Tim Leach, 1971, Key West, FL



Michigan “strangler” vine, at Raven Hill’s Ancient World—a close up look at the tree in the picture to the right.

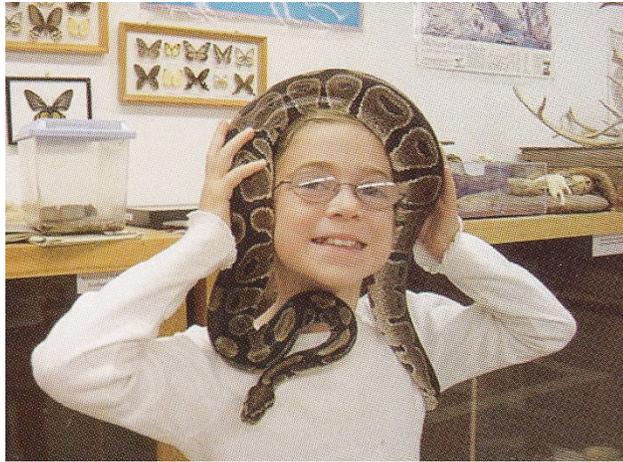


The vine, at the tip of the arrow above, rises out of the ground to the left of the tree. It uses the tree trunk as a support to climb ever upward toward the sun.

Speaking of creeping and crawling and even strangling (mice), it seems appropriate to remind everyone that the Animal Room is alive and well at Raven Hill. Many of the animals have been rehomed to Boyne Valley Community Greenhouse ([www.boynevalleycommunitygreenhouse.com](http://www.boynevalleycommunitygreenhouse.com)) for the duration of the pandemic. Three snakes, two lizards and the fish tanks remain at the Center for Zoom lessons, etc.



Checkers, the corn snake, only strangles mice for his lunch or dinner. Our current Checkers should more correctly be called “Checkers the Eighth”, as all of our corn snakes are named Checkers.



Leroy, the royal python, was comfortable hanging out most anywhere, including being a unique kind of head gear.



To most of us, a mouse-shaped watering can is much cuter than the real thing!

Our thanks go out to Eddie & Pat May for their biweekly mouse runs. The animals are always happy to see their big red truck drive in! They’ve never been so well fed!

Eleanor Roosevelt once said, “The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” Her words were the impetus behind Raven Hill Discovery Center 30 years ago. May the beauty of your dreams for a better future carry you through this current pandemic, especially with the recent upsurge in COVID-19 cases here in northern Lower

Michigan. Please take good care of yourselves and your families. It seems even more important now to be ever vigilant. I can’t say it enough: wear your mask, watch your distance and wash those hands often. Please, keep in touch. I love hearing from you. You can always text or call my cell—231.675.6025. Or, my email is [cheri@miravenhill.org](mailto:cheri@miravenhill.org)



Buddha was a Southeast Asian reticulated python. She lived at Raven Hill from 1994 to 2003 and grew from 6 to 20 feet during that time. Her skin is hanging on the wall in the Animal Room.

Stay safe, *Cheri*