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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: October 24, 2020  
Re: News from Raven Hill!

Part of the fun of these weekly updates is getting sidetracked and making new connections in the process! This week, I even got distracted by the word “sidetrack”, which the Merriam Webster dictionary defines “as a position or condition of secondary importance to which one may be diverted.” The first known use of *sidetrack* was in 1828. But, I digress.....

I have been waiting patiently for weeks, just like any kid, looking forward to this time of costumes and candy. I have been squirreling away some special photos related to Halloween, but all with a little different spin. Maybe, they will provide ideas for helping you celebrate the coming holiday during COVID. Please, enjoy these icons of Halloween and the sidetracks I explored while writing this week’s update!

First, the serviceberry or juneberry in our yard sports several witch’s brooms, which provide nesting places for birds and mammals. Witch’s brooms grow over years on a tree or bush at a point damaged by fungi, insects, nematodes, viruses or other outside forces, causing a mutation, and creating the witch’s broom. If you are riding around this fall and winter, keep your eyes open for witch’s brooms!



Who would have thought! Today, witch’s brooms are grafted and grown as dwarf trees for rock gardens and miniature landscapes.

Second, real pumpkins are nice, but they don’t last. If you are staying home and staying safe, a chunk of firewood and orange paint makes for great pumpkins. Just add a stick for a stem and decorate with leaves & berries, pinecones or acorns.



Thanks to Mrs. Dell’s former fifth graders for the pumpkins. 🎃 I love them.



Third, try your hand at costume design this year! Gather old newspapers, scissors and some tape and go for it! Everyone can participate in a fashion show afterwards, which is all part and parcel of the fun!

(Left) Costumes don’t need to be complicated or expensive. Newsprint works just fine, as evidenced by this party I hosted, when I was 12 years old!



From left to right: quill box raven by quill artist, Yvonne Keshick; metal primitive raven; a printed raven card; and a raven pin, fashioned from a recycled tire innertube.

On an entirely different note, David Clapp, Research Station Manager of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Division, Charlevoix Fisheries Research Station, sent a link for me to check out! Mike and Lynn BeBeau found this toy boat and its message, while searching for rocks on the shores of Lake Superior in their Wisconsin lakeside hometown. The toy boat washed onto the shores of Lake Superior 27 years, after it was first launched!

“It’s been on a journey of its own and it has reached so many people and put a smile on their face. What greater journey is there than that? And in this day and age, we need that.” The BeBeaus relaunched the boat on a calm day, so it could continue its journey. Below is the link to the article:

<https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2020/10/20/lake-superior-boat-found/5992657002/>



With his fancy boots, this is “Raven on the Run” –mascot for Raven Hill’s 5k Family Run, normally held in August.



I end with my usual mantra: please, stay home and stay safe, as much as you can. Wear your mask, watch your distance and wash your hands. Feel free to email me anytime at [info@miravenhill.org](mailto:info@miravenhill.org) or you can text or call my cell—231.675.6025. I love hearing from you!

Later,

Cheri

How about making your own “Paddle to the Sea” boat over the winter? Let us know your launch date and we’ll be there to cheer its sendoff!