



2021 04737 Fuller Road, East Jordan, MI 49727
(231) 536-3369 | www.miravenhill.org
info@miravenhill.org

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: January 9, 2021
Re: Weekly update

Hello, Everyone!

Since we are spending a lot of time at home these days, I thought it might be a perfect time to share Smallville with everyone. Raven Hill was on the cutting edge of the tiny house movement. In 2010, the Center was awarded a grant for **Art and Architecture** (aka Smallville) from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Arts. Along with support from local foundations, businesses and individuals, our little village came to



Smallville houses were the first thing that visitors would see, when driving into the Center.



Look close and you can see the purple ribbon that Eowyn Janka was getting ready to cut, officially opening the **Art & Architecture** exhibit.

fruition. Raven Hill invited emerging artists, teachers and professional artists to create miniature homes (18" or less) for the town of Smallville, so named for Superman's hometown. Artistic creations ranged from realistic to historic to fantasy.

The original exhibit was outdoors. Signs at either end of the town welcomed visitors to Smallville. The population of 451 is a nod to Ray Bradbury's book, *Fahrenheit 451*. A red brick path, instead of a yellow brick road, encouraged visitors to meander amongst the houses and admire them up close. Once, I watched a grandmother and grandson skipping along the bricks, singing the Wizard of Oz song, "Follow The Yellow Brick Road".

Raven Hill celebrated the opening of the exhibit with a ribbon cutting ceremony. For the next ten years, the tiny houses were a wonderful introduction to Raven Hill. Even before checking in, many visitors would stop to admire them. Every year, the houses were moved indoors for the winter. Finally, weathering concerns prompted the Center to permanently relocate the tiny houses into Raven Hill's front entryway. The Steppes, named for the Russian Steppes, now magnificently grace the slope along the north side of parking lot, where Smallville used to be located.



Paper burns at 451 degrees Fahrenheit, making Smallville's population a great trivia question for visitors.



The Steppes encourage the same meandering walks that the red brick path did.



Potter Chuck Koucky created this Smurf house. It was one of the first abodes in Smallville.

I can't possibly share all my "likes" in this update! The twenty-three houses that currently make up Smallville run the gamut of materials from clay to glass, metal, wood and stone. Shown here are a few of my all-time favorites. You'll just have to come see the rest for yourselves!

There are fairytale houses like the Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe by Marge Long and the Three Little Pigs by Leta Holloway. Artist Todd Warner created a Turtle House with his signature caricature animals! The Tin Man's house sports a little heart at the top.

Realistic buildings include a fused-glass chapel and an elegant stained-glass mansion. The Copper Harbor lighthouse, which is completely wrapped in copper "shingles" and Thomas Edison's birthplace are examples of historic buildings. An igloo; a yellow submarine; the Candyland castle and a few found-object houses add to the wonderful array of **Art & Architecture** displayed in Smallville. The ingenuity is amazing. Kudos to the artists who created these tiny houses.

It was a pleasure to share Smallville with you this week. Please know that we are always open to new additions to the collection. We would love to display **your** handiwork!



Georganna Monk, Gayle Levengood and Nancy Hellman built Bonnie's Button House in honor and memory of Bonnie Culver and her love of buttons.



Gayle Levengood fashioned a miniature replica of architect Earl Young's first Mushroom House.

Glinda, The Good Witch from the Wizard of Oz said, "Home is not just a place where you eat or sleep. Home is knowing. Knowing your mind, knowing your heart, knowing your courage. If we know ourselves, we're always home

anywhere." It gives us something to think about during these uncertain times. May your home be your place of solace, where you can know your mind, heart and courage.

I continue to add to my email groups. If you know of anyone who might be like to receive our weekly updates, please send their email address to info@miravenhill.org and I will be glad to add their names. Previous updates are available on our website—www.MiRavenHill.org

I always enjoy hearing from you, so text or call my cell at 231.675.6025 or you can email cheri@miravenhill.org anytime. We all hope for better days ahead. In the meantime, remember to wash your hands often, wear your masks, socially distance and stay away from crowds. We can't let our guard down, even for a second.

Hugs from a distance,
Cheri