

Building a better Halloween display



While it's not every day I think about Halloween, it's pretty often. Why, even before last year, I was thinking, "How am I going to top this?" An idea formed. It seemed impractical, but here I am, building a better Halloween display.

Building a better driveway display

During and after Halloween month, social friends fire off posts and links to cool Halloween decorations and displays.



This looks fit for a graveyard

Cool they are, but alas, I don't have a yard. Or two stories. Heck, I don't even have a side of the house! And, oh, what I could do with a garage.

But, I work with what I have. For years, I didn't even have the graveyard area until I took it upon myself to defoliate the front landscape. That was some effort (read about it, if you care).

The shift to skeletons

For most of my Halloween years, I've just used a combination of lights and inflatables. Throw in some hanging stuff on the trees and that was about it.



The unusable Driveway of Doom

Then, back in 2016, I hit on the idea for my Dead Thing pen. It was an instant sensation, with the neighborhood and me, frankly.

So, each succeeding year was a "follow-up". Dead Things

getting caught. Revenge of the Dead Things. And my driveway began disappearing. Last year, I couldn't even park at my house for a month (check it out).

Building this year: Skeleton blackjack

So, as I detailed in an earlier post, this is my attempt to have skeletons playing blackjack. But, I want to turn it on its ear a little.



Hey, who is this guy?

The mysterious fellow in the trench coat is really three large rats standing on each other's shoulders. Beneath the table, several rats are trying to count cards (and probably failing, since rat mathematicians are not a thing).

It was pretty tough to make happen. The rat skeletons don't sit well on each other. I used quite a bit of monofilament (fishing) line to tie them together. Then I used even more line tying them to the chair. Still, the trench coat covers most of it.

Not everyone will be able to figure out the whole idea, but it looks pretty good, right down to the card shoe the dealer skeleton is using.

Building this year: Skeleton poker

The other side of the driveway features my skeleton poker game. This one really frightened me...not from the scene, but whether I could pull it off.

My basic technique for securing my skeleton animals is to cut small sections of floral wire (comes in green, but I spray paint them black) and bend them into little "U's". I then flip them and use them to tack the skeletons into foam blocks I use for the "floor".



While he's not looking...

However, a couple of my key skeleton animals needed to "race" across the poker table. No way to secure them normally. I knew standard tape wouldn't hold up in the rain.

Ultimately, I used double backed tape on the feet of the skeleton animals. They are a bit concave, so it's not a solid seal, but apparently there's enough tacky area to hold them – so far.

The scene plays out with two skeletons playing poker and one getting distracted by the skittering animals. While he's not looking, his opponent is reaching below the table to a waiting skeleton cat to hand him a key Ace of Clubs (which will just happen to give him a royal flush).

Again, not everyone will pick up on the fact that the skeleton cats below the table are only picking out Aces, but I think the scene came out terrific.

A grave mistake

With the whole area clear of landscape, I am free to design a huge graveyard. To my horror, I discovered that a key group of decorations I use (with large skulls and skeleton pieces) was missing.



The dead rise...

I can't remember if I sacrificed them last year to the garbage

or what, but they are nowhere to be found in my Halloween storage room of terror. Wah.

So, I improvised. I used more tombstones and skeleton animals. I think it still looks okay, though it's not how I originally imagined it.

Building a better Halloween display

So, what about next year?

No. No way. Yeah, I usually can't stop immediately turning my mind to "what's next?", but I can immodestly say I think I outdid myself this year.

I am proud of my work in pulling off what I, frankly, was doubtful I could make happen. I think the displays look terrific (especially at night, with the LED lights glowing). Forgive me if I take a few minutes (or days) to savor it.

And then, yes, I'll start thinking about next year and set out on building a better Halloween display.