HowlHaunter's Workshop

Grim Reaper Prop

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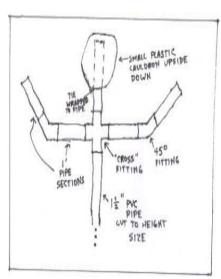
So, I had this $10 mask from WalMart and wanted to make a scary prop out of it. Keep it simple and cheap and have it "hovering" over the back of one of the bushes out by the front door. To do this, you need a frame. I used 1 1/2 inch PVC pipe for this. One ten foot length cut to size --plugs into the bottom of a "Cross" PVC connection. The arms are just 1 foot segments of straight pipe hooked to 45 degree upturned connection with 6 inch straight pipe. Don't use the PVC glue! You don't need it and then you can break the prop down for storage.
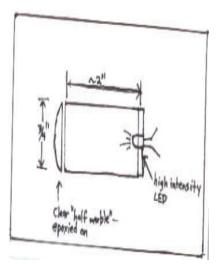
I needed something to hang the mask on for the head. I just used a little $2 plastic cauldron turned upside down and put a plastic disc in the opening to adapt it to the PVC pipe, A couple of tie wraps through drilled holes in the pipe and disc...and there you have it.

The mask I bought has an elastic strap for holding on your head (or, in this case the prop's head). Works great. The mask has a little black material around it. I bought a $5 black twin sheet at WalMart to drape over the head and arms. Great fit. I screwed the sheet into the pipe at a few key points to keep the sheet in place during strong winds.

In my case, I just put a rebar section in the ground just behind the bush, slipped the bottom pipe over it, and tie wrapped the pipe to a bush limb.

Construction diagram

How about some really scary led eyes? Dinky little red led's on this impressive prop would have looked dorky. So, I came up with a way to generate LOTS of light for the eyes with the high intensity LEDs. Just make a bit of a magnifying glass.

First, find some of these clear "half marble" glass beads. You can buy them at places like Pier 1 for about $5 per jar. You only need 2, but you'll get about 50 in the jar. Oh, well, they are made for laying

around in glass dish, so use them for that. Anyway, these things are GREAT for magnifying the led light. Use a simple little 3/4" PVC fitting for the eye tube(at any home improvement store). You need to attach a PVC end cap and keep the other end open. Make it about 2" long. I find this give the best (strongest effect). Drill a hole in the cap end to accept the led. Epoxy the half glass marble over the open end. Test it out! There are plenty of places on the Web that show how to power the led's, so go there if you need help.

Oh, yeah. Epoxy the led tubes into your prop eye sockets like I did here. Yep, Dremel tool to the rescue again to get the right opening size to accept the eye tubes. Then, you might want to use a 555 timer to drive the led's with a strobe effect. Easy to do, just set it up to drive the led's with a flashing rate. Wow, these eyes just are awesome. They actually light up a darkened yard and you can see them for 100s of feet. The red ones look just ominous on a darkened prop. You can see the eye tubes here installed in the mask:

If you don't want to take the time to build the eye tubes, a backup plan is to use the Jumbo (10mm) Red LEDS available from Radio Shack (cat 276-086). These are twice the size of the regular LEDS and really put out the light too. But nothing like the eye tubes!

For another great touch, I bought a $1 plastic flashlight and removed the 3 volt bulb in it. Put in a 6 volt heavy duty bulb and drive it off a power pack (you could use 12 v bulbs, whatever). To get that spooky look when you put a flashlight under your chin.

I tie wrapped and duct taped the flashlight in the bush just under the chin of the prop. For backlighting, I hooked up a 100 Watt outdoor green flood lamp just pointed straight up behind the prop. All the lighting is triggered when a motion detector is triggered by someone walking by (a scared TOT).

I also have a sound effect triggered by the motion detector to enhance this prop. I did my own design.