

DAVIS GRAVEYARD

West Coast Haunters Convention 2011

Tombstone Make and Take





Tombstones

THE DAVIS GRAVEYARD

The must have for any graveyard.

Supplies

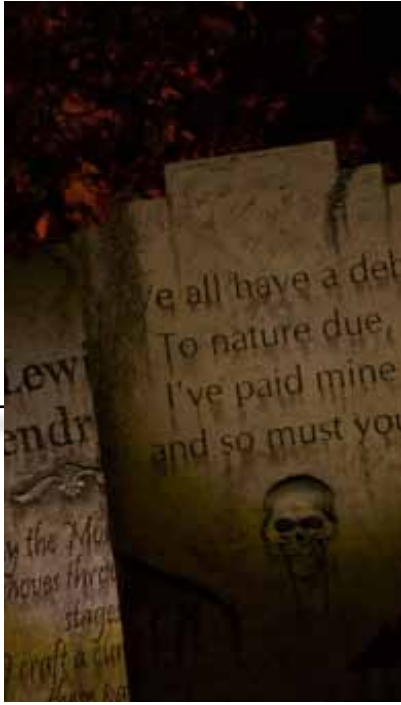
You are going to need:

- ◆ Polystyrene insulation
- ◆ Black latex house Paint
- ◆ Dark gray latex house Paint
- ◆ Light gray latex house paint
- ◆ Various sizes of paint brush
- ◆ Sea Sponge
- ◆ Black marking pen
- ◆ Access to a computer and Printer
- ◆ Polyurethane Construction Adhesive
- ◆ Gorilla glue
- ◆ 3' 1/2" white PVC pipe
- ◆ Blue painter's masking tape
- ◆ Two 3' pieces of 3/8" rebar

Tools

- ◆ Serrated edge knife
- ◆ Hobby knife – our favorite is the X-acto brand knife
- ◆ Hand saw
- ◆ Hotwire Foam Factory Hot Knife





You gotta start somewhere.

The beginning

basics

Creating the blank

We will start by creating an anchoring system for your tombstone. This will assure that your tombstone stays upright.

1. Using a 4' high piece of foam, measure a 2' area and draw a straight line down the middle of the sheet with a black marking pen and cut the sheet so you have a 2'x4' piece.



2. Peel the plastic backing off one side of the foam.
3. Along the 2' wide end measure 6" from each side, then measure 18" up. Draw two lines (12' apart). These mark the groove for the PVC pieces.
4. Use the knife to cut two 1" deep and 1" wide grooves in the back along the lines.

5. Cut 2 pieces of 1/2" PVC 18" long. Test fit them into the grooves to make sure they fit. Use Polyurethane construction adhesive glue the pipes into the grooves. Let dry overnight.



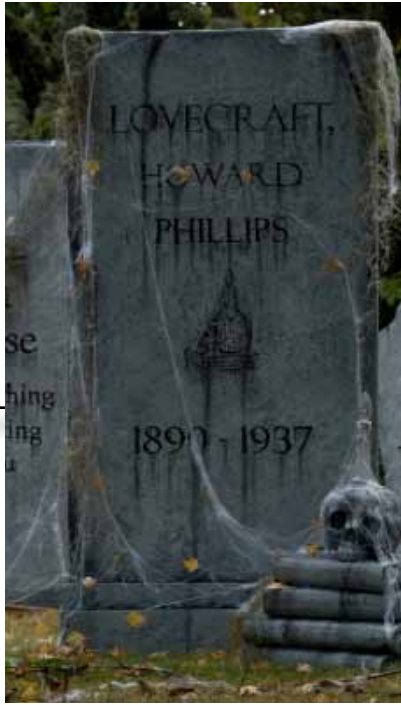
6. The two PVC grooves in the back of the tombstone will fit over two pieces of rebar to hold the tombstone in the ground.

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Faster way to cut foam

If you are going to be cutting detailed shapes you should look into getting a hot wire foam cutter. This tool will slice through the foam with its heated wire very easily and make carving out details much easier.



Are those real?

Shaping & Carving

basics

Shaping the tombstone

Tombstones come in many shapes and sizes, feel free shape your tombstone to fit your needs. For this example we will show the standard half moon top.

1. Towards the (front) top of the “blank” free hand draw a half circle. If you don’t think you can draw it well enough get a garbage can lid and trace it out towards the top of the foam.
2. Cut the half circle out with the knife. You want the tombstone to be life-size.

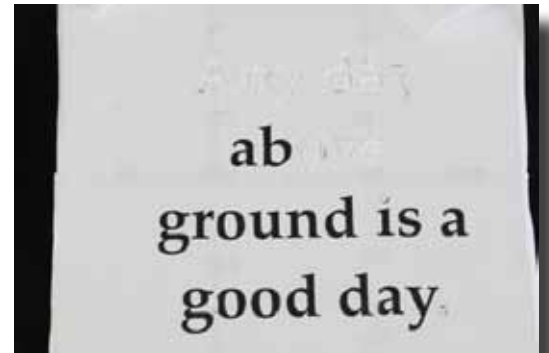
Carving the epitaph

1. Choose your epitaph. A quick search on the internet will return many epitaphs.
2. Use a word processor to print the letters in a large thick font. This will take



several sheets. Keep the lettering in proportion – The name on the tombstone is normally larger than the rest of the text.

3. Use spray glue (3M Super 77) on the back of the printed sheets. Place the printed sheets onto the foam where you want the lettering to be carved. Be sure the type is straight and level.
4. Cut along the outside of your lettering through the paper into



the foam in an approximately 45 degree angle. Use a sawing motion as you cut the letters. (Note: cut the center of the enclosed letters first a, e, o, 6 etc.– pay special attention to which part of the letter is being removed.) cut from either side of the letter or number to create a v shaped “carved” letter in the foam.

5. Keep all your lettering pieces until you are completely done carving – just in case the center of an “o” was not cut out or a letter or word are “missing”
6. Pull out all of the foam bits out of the lettering with the X-acto knife if they did not come out when you were cutting. For large letters where it is impossible to cut the whole letter out at an angle, use the guideline of the carved letter to “pop” the rest of the foam out of the letter.



Are those real?

Details & Painting

basics

Carving details



1. To carve a crack in a tombstone take a serrated edge knife or a hot knife and cut cracks into the foam. Cracks should start from a edge or the top and "crack" down.
2. You can also cut crumbled chunks out of

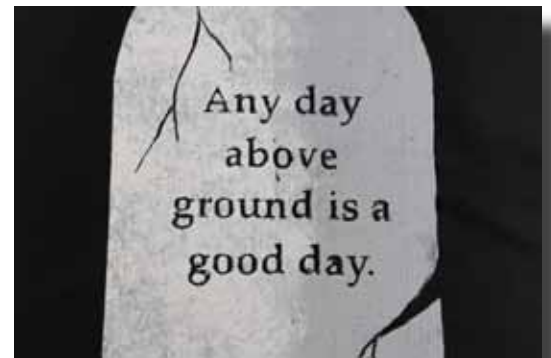
the tombstone to age it further.

Painting

1. Paint the first coat on the tombstone with gray exterior house paint.



2. When painting the letters on your tombstone – use black latex exterior house paint. Use a small brush to fill in all the lettering. Using a roller, paint the front back and sides of the tombstone black and let dry.
1. Paint the first coat on the tombstone with gray exterior house paint. To make this a quick job use a regular house paint roller. You can roll right over the top of your painted lettering and see your handy work show. Then paint the edges with the roller or paint brush.



2. Take some gray paint and mix in a bit of white to make a few shades lighter gray paint. Take a sea sponge and stipple the entire front of the tombstone – especially round the lettering to give it a faux stone look. Repeat this on the sides.

Aging your tombstone

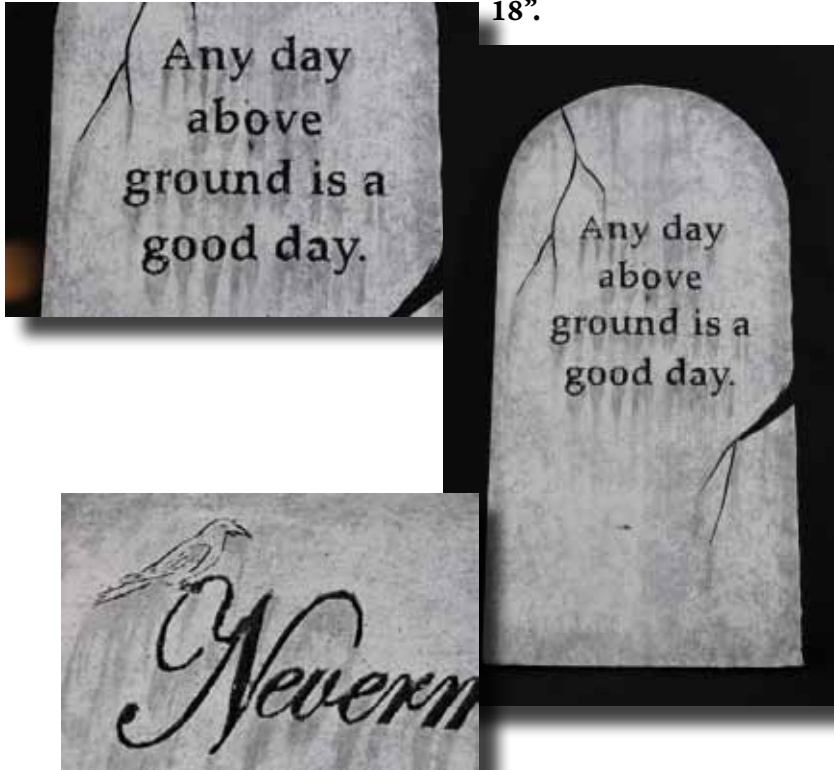
(You don't want your cemetery to look like it was just "installed" yesterday.)

1. Take a small amount of black exterior latex house paint and mix it down with two parts water. This will give you a runny dark gray paint.
2. Lightly paint "drips" down from the bottom of the letters, cracks, upper edges, and top of the tombstone.
3. Use a damp rag to dap the "drips" that are too dark.

4. A normal tombstone will be darker at the bottom and top from the rain. Take a sponge or rag and dip in the watered down paint and lightly pat the bottom and top edges of the tombstone.

Displaying the tombstone

1. Using a hammer pound two 3 foot pieces of 3/8" rebar into the ground 12" apart. Make sure they are not sticking up more than 18".



2. Place the tombstone over the rebar and insert the bars into the PVC pipes at the bottom. Gently slide the tombstone down the rebar until it is resting on the ground.



Tips & Tricks

It seemed like a good idea at the time

A long epitaph may sound good, but it is a lot of carving. Keep your epitaphs short and simple. Small fonts are hard to carve.

Carving with power tools:

The lettering can also be carved out with various power tools as well. You need to avoid anything that gets too hot or the foam will melt and not give you the chiseled look you are after.

Just say no to spray paint

Do not use spray paint – it will dissolve the foam – and after all that work it will make your cry – trust me!



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