



Mannie's How-To page

<http://www.biosci.missouri.edu/liscum/halloween2.html>

Animatronic Zombie

DISCLAIMER: This page reflects Webmasters love of a good 'ol fashioned Halloween. The site IS NOT a horror site per se. If you want guts and gore go elsewhere. If you enjoy the Halloween & Fall season because it makes you feel like a kid again, this page might be for you. Enjoy!

Animatronic Zombie (1998) (some info added 9/99)- In order to create the illusion that one of two corpses was leaving its grave I rigged one with a simple piston-type drive ([see diagram and photo](#)) to physically lift the torso ~12 inches off the "grave site", and return it, and so on.

The most difficult task of this effect was getting the piston/motor set-up to move smoothly on the side glides ([see diagram and photo](#)). The most dangerous task turned out to be the simple drilling of a hole in one of the L-brackets that holds the motor in place ([see diagram and photo](#)).

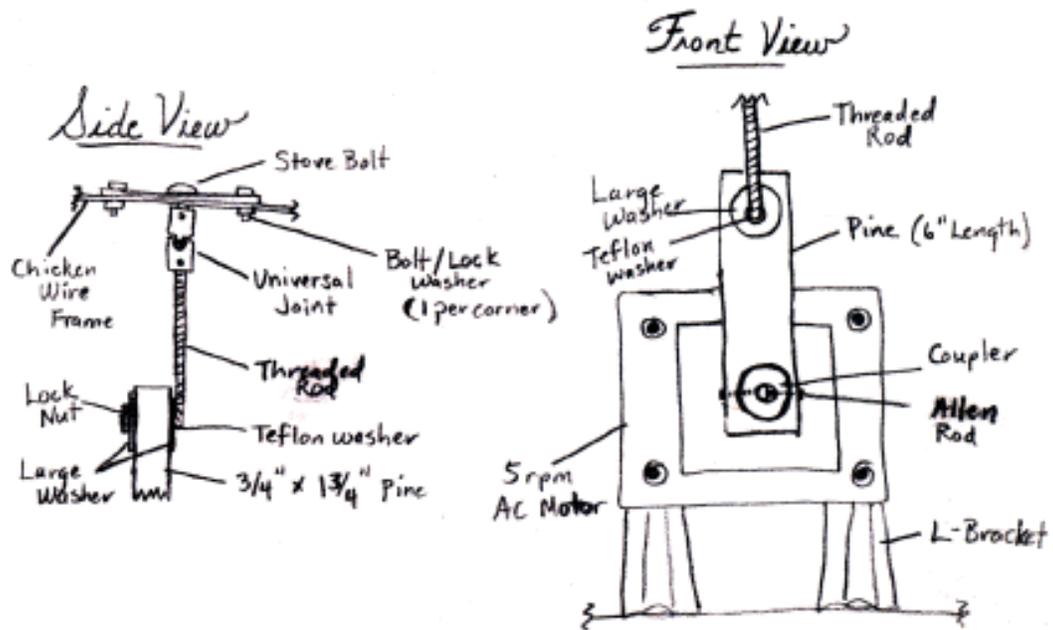
Like an idiot I held onto the razor-sharp (now I know this) metal bracket with my manly (yeah) bare hands, only to have the drill bit catch and spin the bracket free...the effect was to slice my left index finger to the bone (hence my long delay in putting these display descriptions up...I am still pissed at my stupidity). To all you kids out there...use a clamp to hold objects you plan to drill or cut, otherwise you drill or cut your flesh which is not the desired outcome!

I use an infra-red garage door opener to trigger the juice to the effect. This works pretty well, since I can turn the effect on at "strategic times" and save the motor from wear-and-tear when no one is there. In 2000 I am planning to use motion sensors to trigger all animatronic effects!

All in all this display worked out pretty well and most who got close not expecting it to do anything were surprised. Although it really needs sound I

haven't been able to come up with anything cheap and good (both are necessary!)...I'll try again in 2000.

Diagram of piston mechanism



Photograph of actual piston mechanism

Zombie at lowest point in movement.



Zombie at highest point in movement, with piston mechanism exposed.

Close-up of piston mechanism.



Zombie hands I built in 1998. They are anatomically correct (at least in terms of numbers of bones) & were hand-carved from wooden dowels. Not too bad for 15 minutes here and 10 minutes there in the evenings, huh?

