Cemetery Fence Columns

By Richard Benavides

Through The Fog Home Haunt
Arlington Texas

See pictures of Richard's home haunt here

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Gate Columns (2)

2-1 1/2" x 4' x 8' Pink Foam insulation sheets, excess can be used to make tombstones
8-1x2 inch by 6ft pine
2-1x4 inch by 6ft pine
Small Box of 1 1/2" Dry Wall Screws
Couple of caulking tubes of Acrylic Glue, the type for using on foam, Liquid Nails
A tube Regular Liquid Nails
A bottle of exterior wood glue
4ft by 4ft by 1/2 inch plywood
2ft by 4ft by 3/4 inch plywood
1-10ft length of 2inch Schedule 40 PVC
2-2" PVC Couplers
A small can of PVC glue
4 Cans of Gray Stone Paint
2 Cans of Flat Clear Acrylic Sealer
18ft of 14 gauge 3 line extension cord
2-male, 3 prong 15amp plugs
2-Porch/Pole Lamps
2-Flame Flicker bulbs with standard bases.
4-Massive stake type nails

Special Tools

2 1/4" Hole Saw
2ft Light Weight Bar Clamps
Table Saw or Straight edge guides for Circular Saw and router
Large Squeeze Clamps

Cutting Up Of Parts

Cut the 1/2" plywood into two 12" x 12" and two 10 1/2" squares.
The 3/4" plywood cut into two 18" x 24"s for the bases.
Cut the 6ft lengths of 1x2 and 1x4 pine into 5 footers. Keep the excess for the frame.
In the center of the 1/2" square plywood pieces cut the 2 1/4" holes. Take one of the 10 1/2" squares and place on the 3/4" plywood until three
sides have equal space. This will allow you to have a tab sticking out the back side of the column for stakes to be driven into the ground. Now
cut another 2 1/4" hole through the base.

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Assemble the Frame

First the base is a rectangle of 18" (the width) by 24" (the depth)
Since much of this will involve cutting to fit the measurements will not be included.

Attach the 10 1/2" square plywood pieces to the 3/4" plywood with the drywall screws and wood glue lining up the 2 1/4" holes. At the corners of the 1/2" ply fasten an
end of the 1x2s on the depth side with a screw and glue. The top piece of 1/2" plywood attach with screws and glue the other end of the 1x2s from above and flush with the sides. On the depth side center one 1x4 and attach from above at the top and onto the side at the bottom so that the tab will be to the back.
Now do the same for the other column but on the other side making a right and left column. These are for the mounting points for the fence.
Now with the excess pieces of 1x2s fill in the spaces between all uprights to flush it up. About an inch from the edge of the tabs drill two 1/2" in the corners for the stakes.

2" Electrical Conduit

Actually this is the 2" PVC and Couplers for the working lamps at the tops. Cut the 10ft length of PVC into two equal lengths, cut off 3 inches each and glue into the coupler with 1 inch exposed. Fasten into the lower hole with a couple of drywall screws at an angle, toe nailing. Now feed through the upper hole the rest of the pipe and glue into the coupler two inches. Do not seat all the way because you need at least 2", 3 is better, above the plywood to fasten the lamp to it. Secure as you did at the bottom through the top.
It should be looking like picture (#01).

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Pink Board

Now using regular Nails, on the wood only and a bead of the acrylic Liquid Nails close to the outside edges so that it fills the seams. Clamp and let dry overnight. For the top cut a 14" x 14" square piece. Cut the pipe hole of 2 1/4", slip over the pipe and glue with the regular Liquid Nails. Weigh down with a couple of bricks and let too dry over night. (#2) Next day file flush the seams with a heavy cutting, not rasp, file.

Pink Board Trim (However fancy you want to do this will depend on your available tools and skills)
Now cut strips of 3 inches for the trim. The 3 inch strips are routed with a 1/2" round over bit on two sides then sliced in half to make the beads around the columns under the top. Looks better if you use 45 degree mitered cuts. (#03)
Now cut 1 1/2" strips for the middle and lower trim pieces, cut to fit with butt joints and fasten with a small bead of regular Nails but be careful not to have any ooze out from underneath. Again apply the acrylic glue at the ends to fill the seams and all to be filed when dried overnight.(#03)

NOTE: Do not attach center strips lower then the height of the top rail and the lower piece needs to be above the bottom rail of the fence,
horizontal wooden pieces on mine. This so that you have an open area for the mounting strips for the fence. (#090)
Another NOTE: This at first was done with a clamped on straight edge, a circular saw and router making it take a long time especially with the step using a router to give fancy edges. If you have a table saw and a router table, like I have now, this will be a whole lot easier.
Be extra careful when doing Free-Hand routing.

Paint

It takes at least two cans each column of the Gray Stone Paint to cover completely. Let dry overnight then seal with the Flat Clear Acrylic Sealer.
USE ONLY acrylic based paints! Enamel, especially, laquer based paints will melt the foam. Now then again if you want some real rough looking stone, expose some of the foam, spray with the enamel or laquer clear. Let dry then paint over with the stone and it will look like chipped or broken stone.
Have not yet figured it out on how to weather it to make rain stains etc.
The fence attachment strips are painted flat black as the fence and screwed to the side where the 1x4s on the insides are.(#090) When it is time to connect the fence to the columns I use 3 inch screws through the L brackets into the strips. Makes a very solid arrangement after staking it down.

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Electronics

I found on sale at the Home Improvement store these two carriage porch/yard lamps. (#091) Cut the extension cord in half, attach the plugs to one end and match the
colors to the wires in the lamps. Now if I wanted to spend more money I could have bought the lamps with the bases that fit the pipe exactly. Instead I made filler rings
out of 3/4" plywood, cut by a couple of hole saws, that slipped over the pipe making a snug fit. For storage the lamps are removed and placed in a box. When it is time to set up I drop the plug down the pipe, out from underneath, plug in an extension cord and we are good to go.

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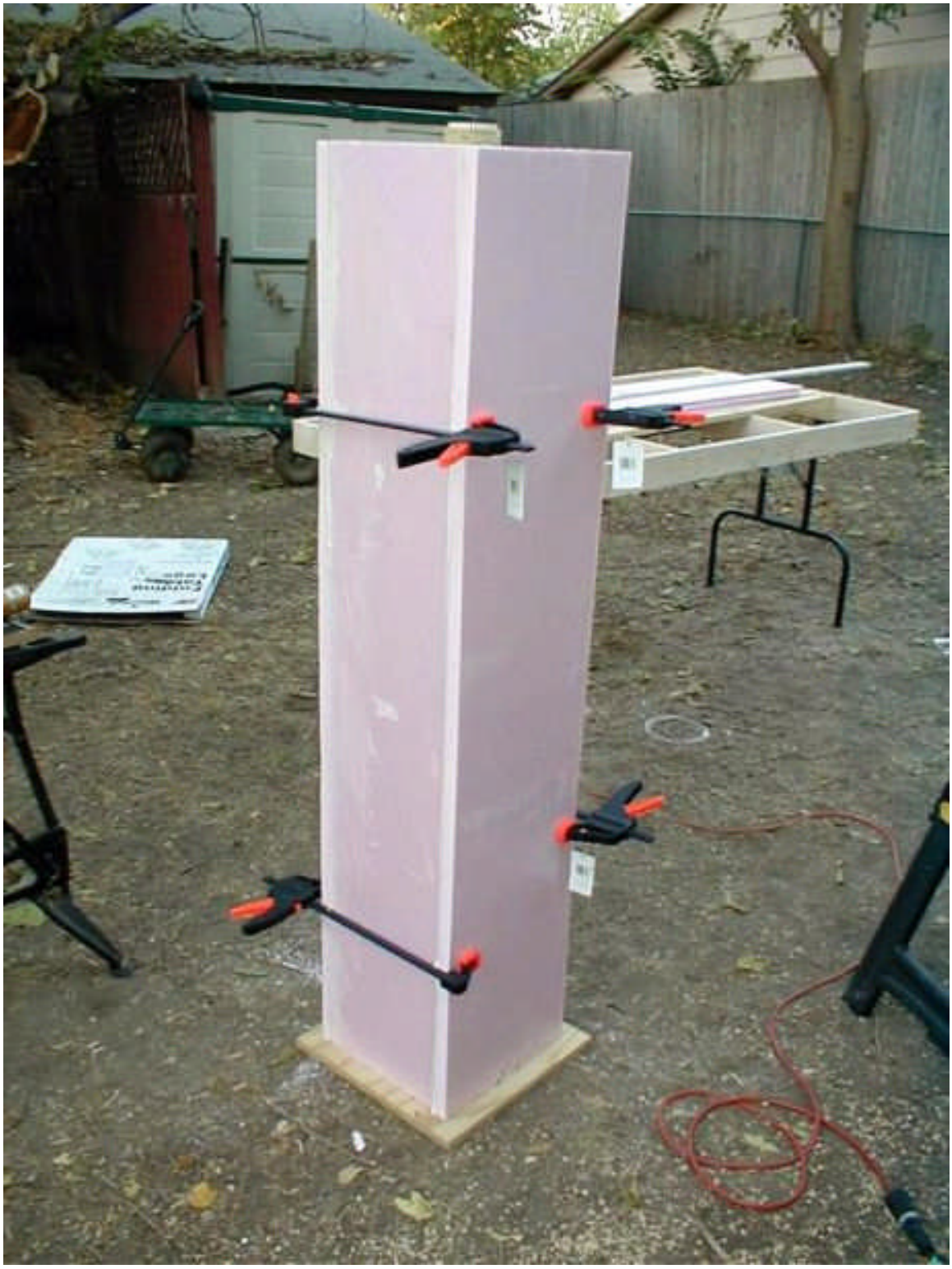

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