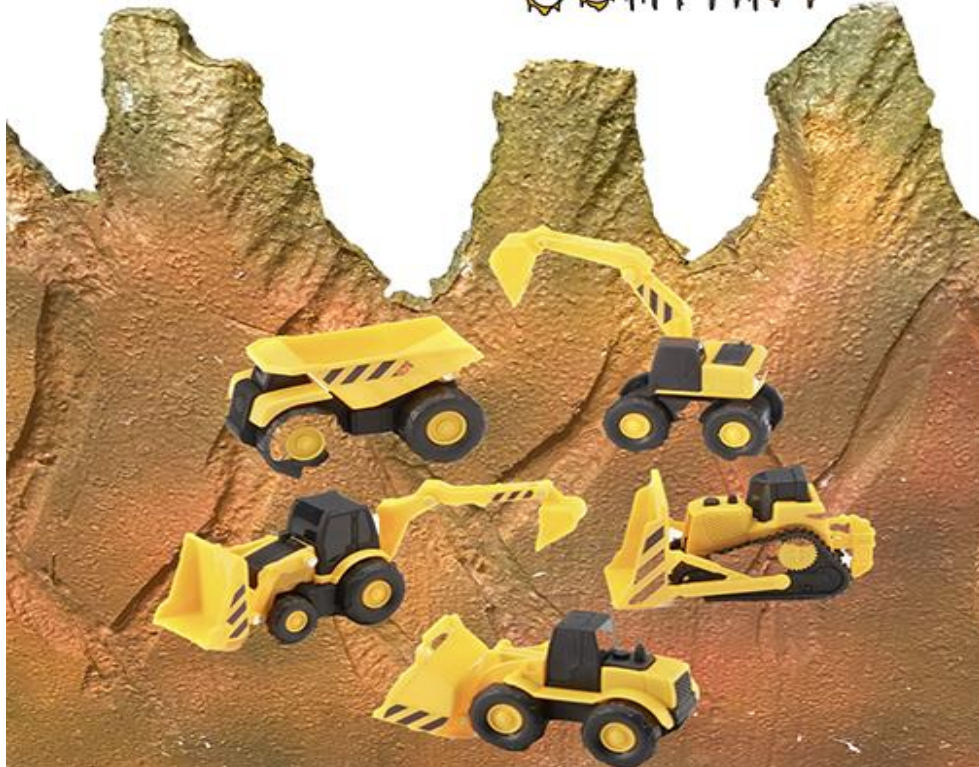




HAUNTSVILLE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY



It is time to begin construction of Hauntsville 2023!

Final arrangements have been made with the Hauntsville Construction Company and construction of this year's village can now move forward. The negotiations began to move when some of the witches threatened plagues of warts might begin if construction did not. There were some issues to be settled as this year's construction will require work at two locations that are 700 miles apart. But the deal was closed when it was agreed the rank and file of the staff from the southern construction zone would be invited to the Halloween Night Gala at the Grimslly Mansion in Hauntsville (you will learn more about that later).

Transportation Florida to North Carolina will be provided by means of the Haunted Taxi Company with a beverages service provided by Mistress Sybil

who operates the Brew Pub of Hauntsville. I heard that they arranged for some guy named Death to keep traffic clear so there will be no delays.

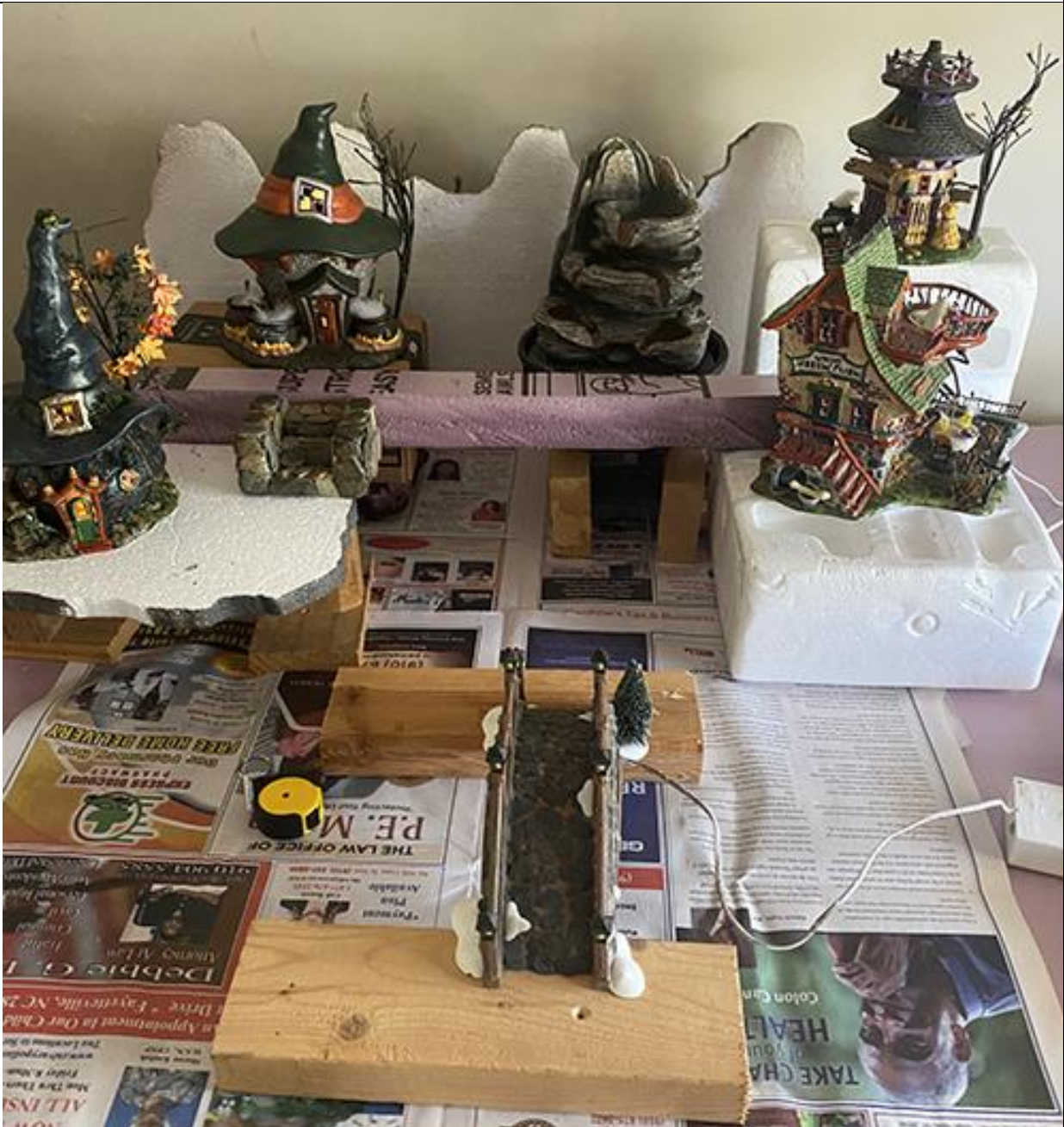


If you have followed along since the beginning of these articles you already know that while my permanent residence is in South Florida, this year's Hauntsville Village Display will be built in Fayetteville, North Carolina. The preliminary layout will be set up in Fayetteville and then the materials will be packed moved to south Florida for construction and landscaping and then returned to Fayetteville for final assembly. This will be quite a challenge and time will tell how this works out. Hope you all will come along for the adventure.

The MASTER PLAN

I've been thinking about and planning this display for over a year. Each year I feature a particular theme for my village and then revolve in the display around my central theme. This year's theme is Witch Hollow. So the Hauntsville Coven, led by the famed Witches Hecate and Circe, who along with the rest of the sisters in the coven, will be the main focus. I have always dreamed of placing a waterfall in the village and for one reason or another it has just never come to pass. This year there WILL be a real waterfall. Silver Ribbons Falls will be a major feature of the village. Additionally, I have not had a covered bridge in my previous Halloween displays and I decided that feature will also be added. All of these features will have pride of place in the display. In previous editions here on my Hauntsville page I have detailed how I created my covered bridge. With

this as background you can check out the image below and see a preview of the Witch Glen portion the village. It doesn't look like much---but by the end of this article you might see some changes.



On the following pages I'm going to outline my thought process and also show how my village dream becomes reality. Of course there will be changes right up to Halloween as new ideas pop up, but one has to start somewhere so here we go.

IS THIS ON THE LEVEL??

Most certainly NOT!! In my villages there are always many levels and just about everything will be displayed on a level either above or below its neighbor. Levels add depth and interest and help make each element easier to see. So keep an eye on how create the various levels throughout the display. Additionally, each feature will be set into its own mini display, I just refuse to line up a bunch of buildings and call it a village. Finally, everything will be connected so that from the point of entry, in this case the covered bridge, a visitor will be able to tour the village as if they just stepped off the haywagon and were out for a stroll.

IT STARTS WITH THE FALLS



Silver Ribbon Falls will be at the end of the main pathway and will be highlighted so as to be the star of the show. Start at the covered bridge, follow the pathway and you will arrive at the falls. The actual falls is a 12 inch desktop falls that I found in a gift shop. The falls is positioned 7 inches above the base upon which the village is built. Please refer to the first image to see the elevation process. I use various wooden and styrofoam supports to achieve the necessary levels. Everything undergoes a bump and shake test to make certain that should the display table experience an earthquake, caused by a visitor, nothing will fall over.

I think this village will be stable enough to withstand a quake of 7 on the Bump and Shake Scale.

The falls in this display is 12 inches high including the bowl that has been countersunk (2.5 inches) allowing the actual base of the cascading waters to be a ground level (as shown above). Behind the falls you should note the double mountain range, one is currently white and the other brown. This setup will allow for the creation of an Aurora behind the falls. There is a 2 inch space between to two mountain ranges where I will be able to hide several C-7 lightbulbs (likely orange in) that will make the front range glow and also illuminate the brown range. See the image below for the mountain spacing.



Kettle Witch House

The first residence I placed into the display is the Kettle Witch house where various potions are brewed by Hecate and her dedicated and skilled staff. In keeping with my theme of constant levels note that I have created a round base for the house to rest upon. This will raise the house about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch above the base of the falls that is displayed just to the right of the Kettle house. I would also like to call your attention to the white mountain behind the Kettle House and the falls.



The white mountains shown above are carved out of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch Styrofoam using my Hot Knife tool. I discussed my carving tools in the previous article on building stairs that is posted on my Hauntsville page. If you look carefully between the Kettle House and the falls' water basin bowl you can see there is a piece of additional Styrofoam currently pinned to the mountains by a floral pin. I use a hundred or more of these pins throughout my displays. They hold things

together or in place including Styrofoam, landscaping and wiring. The little Styrofoam layer adds depth to the mountains and keeps them from looking flat. Additionally, adding this layer allows the falls to blend into the mountains and not just be placed in front of a background. There is a second piece of mountain layer on the right side of the falls that cannot be seen from this camera angle. In the image below you can easily see how I have blended the falls into the Styrofoam mountains. The extra layer is also more visible from this angle. Eventually these mountains will be painted gray so the falls will look like they are part of the mountain range. I will also glue the small layer of foam onto the main mountain but that will come later when I finally get everything to fit together.



Frog Witch House and pond

Working from the highest level back down to the base, the next residence to be installed is the home of Circe. This enchantress captures princes along with other wayward travelers and then turns them into frogs. I'm quite sure you have heard the roll she plays in many childhood fairy tales. Don't just laugh those tales off, I assure you she is quite real, and you will soon see the proof.



In the photo above you can get a better idea of the levels I keep building into the display. In the above image you can see Hecate's house is at the highpoint, the falls base is one level lower. Circe's house will be one level below the falls (note the Styrofoam piece on the left), and then the frog pond is one level lower as seen on the right. To connect everything there will be a runoff river extending from the falls basin to the little cascade I carved from a 2" block of purple/pink foam. After tumbling over the cascade the river flows into Circe's pond with its lilly pads and frogs. The little cascade was carved with my Hot Knife tool I discussed in the article on making stairs.

The image to the right shows my plan for the runoff river from the falls basin to the cascade. The water will be made using clear silicone caulk that purchased from Home Depot. In my next article I will discuss landscaping and how to carve the river into the foam base on the Kettle House level. The river will flow over the cascade and into Circe's pond. Shown in the image is an Autumn Hedge that is part of the Department 56 collection. It will form the barrier between the pond and the mossy glen and stairs that will be in the space shown in the lower right corner.



Before moving to the next level I wanted to show the bones that support the various levels and provide some explanation. One of the major problems I have is wiring and lighting the village. A never ending nightmare is what to do with the wires. If you look at the image on the right you can see my solution. The Kettle Witch and the falls along with the various accessories such as street lamps will have their wires passed back under the mountains and dropped behind the display. Where you see the 2x4 wooden supports note the space between them. This is where I will drop the wires from the Frog Witch level and then they will be passed back through the hole next to the flat 2x4 supporting the kettle house. The space between the pink foam in the foreground will allow room for the wires coming from the Swamp that will be the next level I'll discuss. To the right you can see a staircase in its temporary position that will allow access from the Witch Glen up to the waterfall and the Kettle House.



Below is the assembled level of the Frog Witch House. The pond will be on the right with the house on the left. The two pieces of Department 56 fall hedges will form the borders of this scene on both sides. The more I look at this picture the more I think I might add a rocky black layer under the hedge on the right. It may make the pond appear more sunken into the scene.



Old Joe's Everglades Haunted Swamp

I live in south Florida the home of the Everglades. If you have ever been to the everglades, especially at night when you can hear the owls hoot, the bull gators bellow and the great blue herons flap their 60" wings as they rise in flight, you will know what it means to be afraid of the dark. I recently found a Department 56 replacement part showing a man I've decided to call "Everglades Joe".

When I found Joe I knew he had to be part of my Hauntsville display. I can already see Old Joe poling his flat bottom boat through the Cypress Swamps. He has with him his trusty friend Al E. Gator, his pet rat, Ricky who is perched on his shoulder, and the raven Hugin (you will have to know your Norse mythology to understand this name) who is perched on the front of his boat. I have made cypress trees (see my article on Specialty Trees), collected vultures and other special elements for this scene. You will have to wait until the village is finished to see the results.

Here comes Joe!!!!



Directly below the Frog Witch House will be the location for Joe's Swamp. To add to the gloom of an everglades night, this area will be lit with blue lights.



The image above shows the drop from the Frog Witch house down to Joe's Swamp. Note the holes in the supports for the Frog Witch pond where I will eventually place lights.

Below you can see the cliff I carved for the backdrop and where I will place a waterfall to move the water from the lily pad pond down to the swamp. The water will be made from silicon caulk and will be back lit with a blue light. The falls will be on the right and Joe's cave will fill the hole on the left. Cypress trees and Spanish moss will fill the swamp. The trees will have some special add ons that I have dreamed up since I wrote the Special Trees article. As I build the village I often come up with things that can be added to the village story. These villages are supposed to be fun and I often find myself giggling over something

new. I think these creative touches and the most fun in the entire building process.



While I was North Carolina I laid out and rough cut the major pieces for the Witch's Glen section of the display. I spent the better part of two days rough cutting the pieces shown here and the rest of the Witches Glen. All these pieces were marked and then packed for transport to south Florida. In Florida I will do the fine detail cutting and shaping and then apply the landscaping which will involve painting, and adding the grass, brush and water features. I will also be constructing a number of small details to make the village come to life.

My next article will detail my landscaping process and the making of the water features. Until then, why not start building you own village?

If you have questions or comments feel free to send them to me at
treadwl@comcast.net

HAPPY VILLAGING!