

A haunted house can be a good thing - on Halloween

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Bones sit atop a pile of leaves and dirt -- the earth that covered them is eroding after a long burial.

Real as they may appear, these bones are rubber and form a fake skeleton, warped and wilted by heat, humidity and time.

Fans of haunted houses will get the chance to see the bones, and more, Wednesday evening, from dark to about 9:30 p.m., at Timothy Ewing's home at the bottom of Seaview Circle.

"Every year it gets a little bigger and bigger and bigger," said Ewing, who is offering the free Halloween haunted house for the sixth year. "It's my favorite holiday."

Neighbors in past years haven't voiced complaints about the displays, he said.

The latest addition, a skeletal pirate in a suspended cage, was nearly finished last Halloween, but Ewing put off what he thought was about two more

hours of work for this year's holiday. He spent about a week getting the skeleton ready, and thought it looked pretty scary -- until he came home and saw his cat curled up on the pirate skeleton's lap, sleeping.

So Ewing added more to the costume -- dreadlocks reminiscent of Capt. Jack Sparrow in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies.

"The jaw moves up and down," the 51-year-old said, describing the skeleton that sits inside a cage suspended from a tree in the front yard. "Kids will be able to hear him talk."

To bring the skeleton to life, Ewing installed a wireless camera, a speaker, a motorized hinge to make the jaws move and hardware that coordinates the jaws' movements with sounds from the speaker. A person sitting inside Ewing's home will be able to watch children and adults approaching the skeleton and talk to the visitors using a microphone.

Visitors will first pass by a small cage, nicknamed the "Paige Cage" after his granddaughter, Paige, who built it a few years ago, in which small skeletons stand. Ewing said young children small enough to slip between the cage bars sometimes pose between the skeletons for spooky photos. Inside the gates, skeletons hang on crosses, a pirate ship looms overhead on a precarious-looking perch atop the fence. The ship's cannon won't be booming this year, but may some day, Ewing said.



Tim Ewing creates a creepy Halloween scene at his Sea View Circle home. - Photos By Michael Darden | West Hawaii Today

Skeletons, which, except for a few defects, could have been used for medical school classes hang from crosses, wearing street clothes and pirate costumes, and a graveyard fills one corner of the lawn. Other bones are scattered across the ground.

Visitors will be able to spot a skeletal bride and groom through one window, and a wizard's room in another. Black screens and black lights will contribute to the creepy ambiance, blocking outside light sources.

The setup didn't seem too frightening in broad daylight, but when dark falls Halloween night and the fog machines cloud the air, Ewing anticipates parents and kids screaming at the sights and sounds.

"You can't have enough fog machines," he said.

Ewing said his wife, Leah, estimated 200 to 300 people stopped by last year, and about 100 to 200 people walked through the year before.

Ewing, who works for Sandwich Isle Divers when he's not planning the next year's Halloween display, took a few days off work this week to put together the haunted house, though work started the day of the Ford Ironman World Championship a few weeks ago, when he couldn't get into town anyway, he said. His inspiration comes from haunted house specials on television, correspondence with other Halloween fans.

"I've had one girl never make it to the candy in four years," Ewing said. "I've had moms scream. Sometimes it's a little intense for the smaller kids."

To get to the candy, children must walk down a path alongside the house, where black screens and black lights will contribute to the creepy ambiance as they block other lights. Walking into the dark, Ewing warned, the children will find ...?