Some Thoughts on Small Lettering

By Mark Fineman

For black lettering on light tissue, I make my own decals. The lettering is made on computer (almost any graphics/Paint program will do). The printout is then photocopied. Then use ordinary Scotch Mystic tape and apply it to the lettering the sticky side of the tape is in contact with the letters. Burnish the tape with the end of a hobby knife or similar blunt object; cut out the tape.

Soak the tape in cold water for 30 seconds, and use your thumbs to start removing the paper fibers. Work slowly and repeat the soaking and scarping until all of the fibers are gone.

You will be left with a clear piece of tape in which the toner of the lettering has been embedded. If you let it dry, most of the adhesive properties return, and you can apply the tape to your model. However, just to be sure, I usually apply the clear tape/lettering strip to a piece of lineless double-sided tape (illustrators call this stuff "snot tape"). It is available in art supply stores. I've written about this technique many times, and it works very well.

For light lettering on a dark background: Apply white pressure- sensitive letters (Letterset, for example) to clear decal paper and then apply as you would any water slide decal. Still   another technique is to cover the model except for the bay where the lettering goes. Use a piece of white tissue taped to an 8-1/2 X 11 papers. Use your computer to make a printout of the lettering and background and print it on the tissue. Use this to finish the open bay of the model. Since the background of the printout is the same as the overall tissue color, the two should be a match.