

LIGHTEN UP YOUR TISSUE GLUE

By George White

One day recently I was sitting at this blasted computer with my mind in neutral (as it often is) and incomes an email from a chap by the name of John Pakiz, who lives in Omaha, Nebraska. He proposed an idea which was so unique that I feel to compelled to share with other modelers.

John says that instead of using Elmer's glue diluted with water for tissue attachment, which many folks do, he uses a solution of Elmer's "Glue-All" from which the solids have been removed using 91% alcohol to create a glue he calls Elmcohol. He claims the result is a much lighter glue, and on fragile framework, there's very little water in it to create warps. Since Elmer's already has some water content, adding water only adds more and a greater tendency to create warps and wrinkles. Since a major ingredient of Emlcohol is alcohol, when it dries, it will also be much lighter than white glue,

To produce this stuff, he puts a some Elmer's glue in a small baby food jar, and adds 91% isopropyl alcohol. He uses a ratio of about one part Elmer's to 4 parts alcohol. He immediately starts stirring the mixture with a hardwood stick. After about two minutes, all the solids in the Elmer's glue will have coagulated and formed around the stick, leaving a liquid glue which looks like egg whites. You may need to experiment with the exact formula — if you don't have sufficient alcohol in the jar, you won't have any liquid left to use as glue. He cautions that the stirring stick needs to be harder than balsa because as the solids start forming around the stirring stick, it becomes harder to stir.

John says it isn't necessary to dope the wood frame before using Elmcohol — just sand it smooth before applying. and put the tissue on just like you would have when using diluted Elmer's or dope. It stays flexible enough to allow you to smooth out or rearrange the tissue, but if you dawdle too long, you can always touch it with alcohol to reactivate it. John also claims it has a reasonably long shelf life in a tightly closed jar.

John gives credit for figuring this stuff out to the brothers Ralph and Paul Bradely. He also says that Pat Trittle has tried this stuff and has had good success with it, with both wet and dry tissue. I haven't tried it on a model yet. I've found that using diluted white glue to be much more of a hassle than UHU, but I've often wondered how much weight I'm adding to my models using UHU glue, which doesn't evaporate like the alcohol would in Elmcohol. I did give this stuff a quick test on some scrap and it indeed seems light and holds tissue extremely well. I let it dry on some balsa and then reactivated it with alcohol before attaching tissue. By doing this, the added alcohol causes the glue to take longer to dry, but when dry, it holds as well as ever. I'd be interested in hearing the experience of others on this.