

Filling in the Gaps

by George White

While I'm sure that this is a non-issue among the highly skilled readers of this mullet wrapper, this slothful builder seems to inevitably have little gaps and imperfections in the structure of my models. As a consequence, when I cover the structure with Jap tissue, there are more imperfections showing than a candidate for a prime time TV full body makeover. As one writer said recently, attempting to cover up imperfections in the structure of the model with tissue is like trying to hide poor auto body work with paint.

After watching a friend do a beautiful finish job on some cabinets, he recommended I try some stuff called "DAP Fast'N Final" Lightweight Spackling from the local hardware store. This stuff is water cleanup, cheap, feather light when dry, sands like chalk after about a 2 hour drying time and doesn't shrink. You use it right out of the can — no mixing with anything else. Nitrate dope doesn't seem to bother it. It is white and the label on the container says it contains ethylene glycol and amorphous silica. An 8 ounce container looks to be a lifetime supply even for a slob like me. This stuff isn't structural, so don't expect it to deal with joints which flex. I've used it to fill in tiny gaps between ribs and spars and leading and trailing edges. I've even built up ribs in cases where one doesn't fair into the trailing edge properly. The instructions say "don't use as a skim-coat." I've done some skim coating with it and haven't had any problem.

So, while it's inconceivable that you'd ever have any gaps in your structure, should that ever happen, give this stuff a try.