



A New Challenge!

Some small businesses that are suffering because they are closed are the personal service providers: Physical trainers like Mary's Fitness, hair cutters, massage therapists, individuals who clean our houses and businesses, and other similar service providers who can't offer their close contact services right now.

Many of us, on the other hand, collect regular salaries in the form of social security, pensions and regular wages (those who can continue to work). If you regularly schedule training or cleaning or massages every week or every month, you have just gotten a pay raise because you aren't getting those regular services so you're not paying for them. At least that's how I view it.

So I challenge everyone who still gets a regular paycheck and who uses these kind of personal services to continue to pay your providers. They are your friends and you want them to be in business when this is over.

So when you have to clean your own house this week, send your regular payment to your cleaning service. If you exercise with a trainer, continue to exercise on your own and pay your trainer. Please don't cut your own hair.

April 10, 2020 We keep cutting kits, but it's a moving target as to how many we will have when you come through the door. We've cut more than 3447 kits now, and that does not count the hundreds of masks that individuals have cut and donated from their own stash! We have delivered at least 1746 completed masks to a variety of groups: Salvation Army, Frontier Vet, Fire District 2, First Responders, Cheyenne Hospital Foundation, the VA, nursing homes, clinics, nurses, individual doctors, Comea Shelter, Health Reach, A&C Feed, Meals on Wheels, other delivery services to the elderly, WIC, anyone who has come to the shop to ask for a mask,....I know I am forgetting all the places masks have been donated. And that does not count the masks that you have made and have given away.

We cannot supply every individual who comes to the door for a mask, although I try. We have gotten calls from lots of big corporations, various departments within the State of Wyoming, the military and the guard. I want my community to be safe, but we can't handle all needs. It breaks

my heart that we can't, but we can't.

So I ask everyone who comes in wanting masks to sew at least 5 masks, keep a couple and bring the rest back for donation. If they can't sew, they know someone who can. Within two degrees of separation, you'll find a quilter, a mom or grandmom with a sewing machine, a neighbor, a friend, a friend of a friend. Anyone can operate a sewing needle and can stitch these by hand. It's not hard. I challenge every regular customer to make at least 5 masks and bring them back for donation.

For those you who have already donated masks, you are marvelous (do I sound like Billy Crystal?) AND please keep making more! I know you are tired of making them, but the need continues to grow because our Covid-19 numbers in the state continue to rise.

For everyone who has donated elastic, fabrics, your time and talent, and money to keep this project afloat: Thank you very much! And please, send me an email reminding me what you have given, from fabric, to elastic, to ties, to masks, to money. I am trying to keep a list, and I have many of you down, but I know I have forgotten others in all the chaos. I will throw a big party for us when it's safe -- sometime this summer!

You should know that my goal every April Fools' Day is to fool at least someone with my story. I am happy to report that my record is still intact! Let's hear it for Ronald Donld, the fictitious franchise owner and the very real Oculudentavis khaungraae hummingbird-like dino.

Did you see the pink super moon this week? Tuesday's moonrise was obscured by a few clouds, but Wednesday's was spectacular. I love watching the light reflect in the sky as the moon gets closer & closer to peeking out. I bet the early evening newscaster who told me that the moon was going to be pink Tuesday night had a bit of shock. Because, of course, the moon wasn't pink. And I honestly don't think he knew that, based on how excited he was to see a pink moon.

This was a Denver station I was watching, and I bet all the Denver stations watch each other because by the time the 10 pm news came on, the weather woman on a different station made a special point to tell everyone that the "pink" moon was called that because it is the harbinger (she didn't use that word) of flowers to come in April. And not because it would look pink.

But of course that's not what I want to talk about. Nor do I want to talk about stay at home orders, because that's all Becca can wrap her mind around, and I'm getting tired of talking about it with her. Becca, for those who don't know, is my very opinionated miniature red tri Australian Shepherd. She

worries a lot about all sorts of things, but not the stay at home order. That's just perplexing to her.

"I stay at home every day," she said. "I don't complain."

"That's because you don't like to go anywhere."

"That's because you only take me to the vet."

"You've come to the shop."

"Yes, after you've taken me to the vet. I'd rather stay home and bark at joggers, watch the antelope, count the number of cars on the road, chase the birds. You know, dog stuff. It's fun," she said.

"Well, most people are getting a little stir crazy staying inside and we have a ways to go yet," I told her.

"You could tell people what they should be doing at home. People always need suggestions on how to keep busy," she pointed out.

"How do you know....." Actually, I do know the answer to that. Becca surfs the web, although I don't know how she does it because I don't have wi-fi or internet at the house. But I bet she's seen all the crafty sites telling people how spend all their free time. So other than sewing masks, sewing quilts, knitting, crocheting and embroidering, what else can you do during the 16 hours or so that you are awake.

I bet you've already cleaned everything you want to clean, organized your sewing room, read a book or two, organized your closet, and you're now debating whether to make potholders for Christmas gifts. So here's a list of all sorts of other useless (okay, organizing your sewing room isn't useless) things to do (this comes from a list off the internet of 100 things to do while at home. It's severely edited and includes side comments from me):

Put together puzzles. So if you don't have one, sorry, you can't go out & buy one. Who knew we had to be prepared with puzzles in the event of a pandemic.

Start a journal. 100 years from now your great grand kids might be interested in what great grand ma did in the old days when there were such things as pandemics.

Learn to play the bagpipes and practice outside. The neighbors will love it.

Watch all those PBS movies about British royalty and all of Henry's 8 wives. Or is that Henry the 8th and 6 wives. And then watch them again, because you're never going to remember which queen came when & who got beheaded.

Read War and Peace. It will provide some perspective. Now, I've read War & Peace and really liked it. My problem was at the time I couldn't find anyone else who had read it so I couldn't talk to anyone about it. But if you read it now, don't expect me to remember the details, so I won't be able to talk to you about it.

Meditate. But not when the dogs are around. If you're on the floor, that's their territory and you won't be able to concentrate on anything other than keeping them off of you.

Look at pictures of puppies. Okay, that will take you about 10 minutes.

Learn calligraphy. That's high on my list, I'll tell you. When the post office shuts down, you won't have anyone to send your fancy letters to.

Organize your Tupperware and all of the plastic tubs you save. Find the lids first.

Read all the New Yorker issues piled on your kitchen counter. That should take you until the end of July.

Don't try out at-home aerobics or yoga videos. If you haven't done either before and get hurt, the last place you want to go is the hospital.

Fix stuff around the house, but don't fall off the ladder. See advice above about trying yoga.

Taste wines. Lots of them. Liquor stores, like marijuana stores, are considered essential business. So they're open. Buy enough wine to have a bottle a night through at least the end of the month.

Don't write your novel or poetry. You'll just wallow in the morose. Leave the writing to the experts. In 18 months or so, you will be able to tell when the pandemic arrived because all of the books, from fiction to fact, will have only one subject. It's a little like when a national quilt teacher comes to town to teach and two years later all the quilts in the local quilt show are identical. And finally, because it's Easter, find Messiah Refreshed on your favorite streaming music source (like Spotify) and listen to it. The choruses are stirring, the sopranos glorious, the tenors bold, the basses deep and you can even hear the altos! That's me. This is the recording I did last summer at Abbey Road Studios in London with the Jonathan Griffith singers and the National British Children's Chorus. Enjoy. Stay safe.

The Good News Quilt Scroll Down for Part 4

We will not let this pandemic get the best of us! Quilters have a strong history of stitching through any kind of crisis, so we are well equipped to manage, stay hopeful, and have a finished product at the end.

Sew (clever, huh) here we go!

Total fabric yardage needed:

- 1 1/4 yards of background, preferably whitish.
- 1 1/4 yards of colors (we'll get back to this)
- 1 1/2 yards of another background, preferably whitish
- 1 1/2 yards of colors (we'll get back to this)
- 2 1/4 yards border

Size of quilt 75 X 84 (you can make it larger, but you will have to adjust fabric requirements, of course)

Step one: Find your fabrics! For background, you can choose 2 different white on whites, 1 1/4 yards of one white and 1 1/2 yards of a different yet compatible white. You can also choose 3 yards of various whites from your scraps, all different but all compatible. Not to confuse you further, you can choose compatible styles of 1 1/4 yards white on whites and different compatible white on whites for the 1 1/2 yards. I will be very clear, in the instructions, which whites go where. And I'll give pictures. You can add some black on whites (or blue on white, etc) for this part, if you wish, just make sure the visual aspect of the background is primarily white.

For your colors: The brighter, the better. We're not going to make this quilt in somber colors. You can if you wish (the quilt will come out just fine) but we need cheering up and bright colors are what the doctors (quilt ones) are ordering. My suggestion: Pull a pile of bright colors from your stash. If you don't have a stash of bright colors, come in. We've got lots of brightly colored fat quarters. This quilt will look best if your bright colors are tone on tone, meaning, don't choose various brightly colored flying pigs on a multicolored background.

For both the whites and the colors, if you are using up scraps, the minimum size you need is 5 1/2" X 5 1/2". If you are working from fat quarters, you will need about 13-14 fats of color and 13-14 fats of white.

Part 2:

Cut 56 squares of white(s) and 56 squares of color. Pair a white with a color. Draw a line down corner to corner. Sew a scant 1/4" from each side of the line. You will get 2 half square triangles from each square. Square each one to 5" X 5".



That's it! Don't worry about color or placement. NOTE: If you have already cut your squares and you cut them at 5" X

5": DON'T PANIC! You can still use them. Just square your triangles to 4½" X 4½" .

Part 3:

From your remaining fabrics cut 2 ¾" X WOF strips of color and white. You need 15 white strips and 15-16 color strips. If you are using 2 different colors of white, now is the time to use your second white. NOTE: If you cut your squares in Part 2 at 5", cut your strips at 2 ½" X WOF.

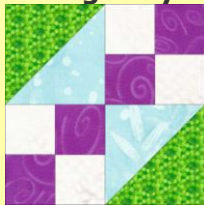
If you are working with fat quarters, you will need to cut at least 30 strips, making sure you cut your strips 22" X your width (2 ¾" or 2 ½").

Sew your strips together. Cut apart into 2 ¾" (or 2 ½") segments. Sew the segments into 4-patches, mixing your colors.



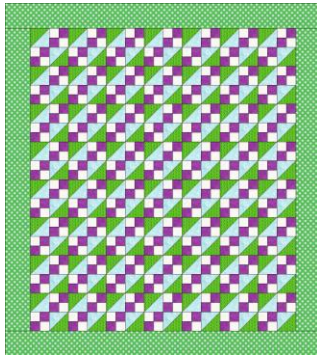
Part 4:

You now have half square triangles that are 5" X 5" (or 4 ½" X 4 ½") and 4-patch blocks that are the same size. You will pair these together to make your block! These will square to 9 ½" X 9 ½" (8 ½" X 8 ½"). But there is more! Stay tuned for the final instructions on how to put it together. The pattern I have drafted calls for 56 of these blocks. But you can make it smaller or larger by making more or fewer blocks.

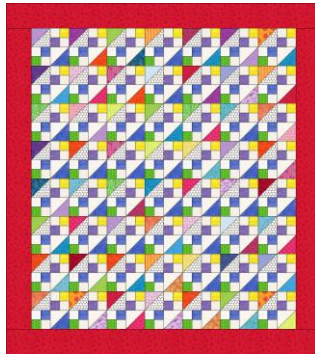


Part 5: Putting it all together. This is where the fun starts, because there is no one way to put the blocks together. Your challenge is to experiment with turning the blocks every which way to create the design of your choice. But I will provide some examples. This block is an excellent example of how a 1 block quilt can look very different depending on how you place the blocks. And because you have plenty of time to fiddle with the placement of the blocks --- have fun! Add borders of your choice. Mine will be 6 ½" and will be cut to the size of the quilt. Inner borders (while not shown in the pictures) can also be used.

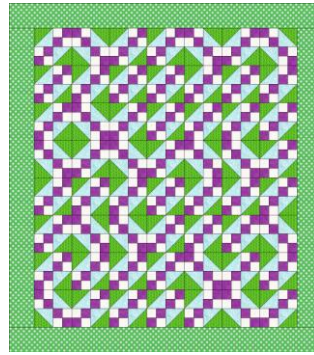
My examples are just that, and they are not my best work. It is hard to manipulate this block on the computer without going crazy. It is easier to do it with the actual blocks--my blocks are still in pieces on the floor by the sewing machine.



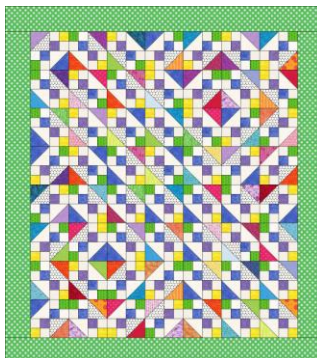
basic & boring



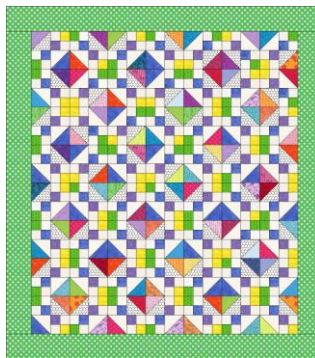
basic, but because of all the colors, not as boring



more interesting



interesting



better, very uniform

Travel, Explore, Cruise, Quilt!

We are sailing with Princess Cruises on December 29-2020-January 8, 2021!

All Aboard!



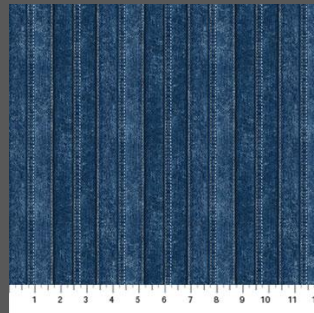
The Princess sale has been continued. The sale includes free premium

beverage package, payment of gratuities and free wifi. On board credit will also be offered. I don't have the date when this sale ends, but don't wait too long. You can always sign up to travel with us, even through next December, but it's hard to say whether this specific sale will be offered again.

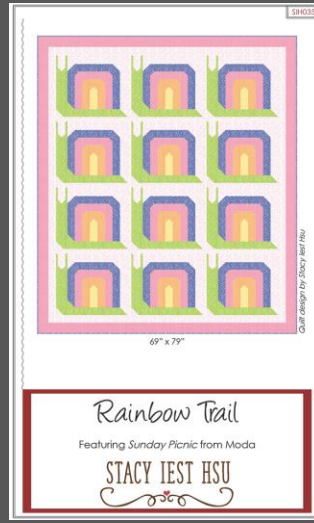
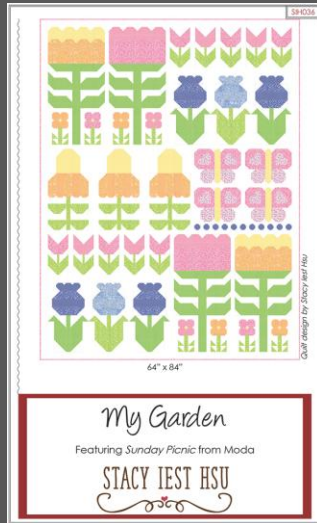
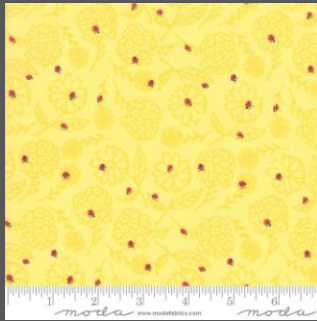
WHAT'S NEW!!

We have very few new fabrics in and I will not be getting many through the April, it just depends upon which companies are open for shipping, my bottom line, and whether we need critical supplies for this Covid-19 pandemic.

From Northcott:



From Moda:



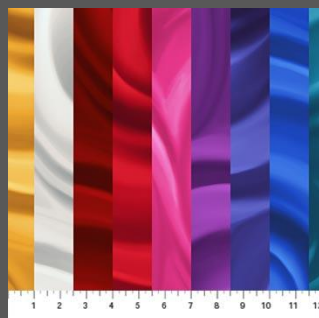
From Riley Blake:



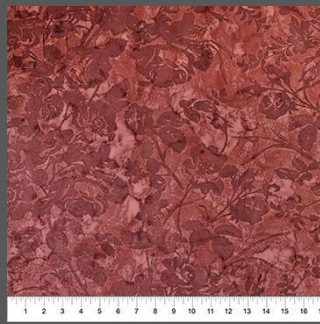
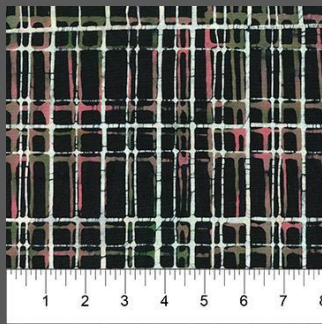
From Hoffman:



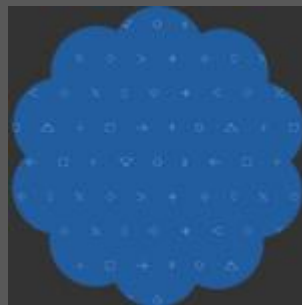
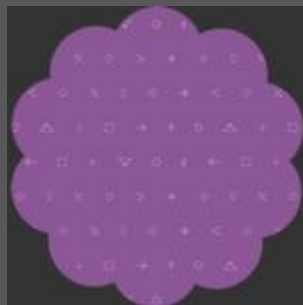
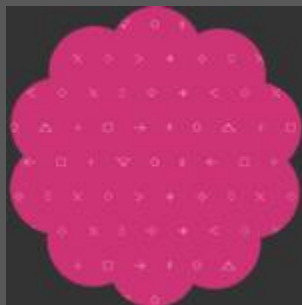
From Northcott:



What you can do with the stripe. It's a pattern that I don't have in right now.



From AGF:



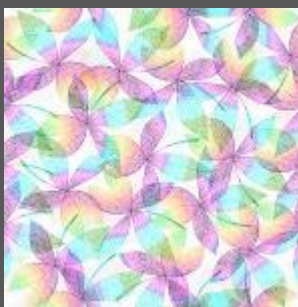
From AH:



From Hoffman:

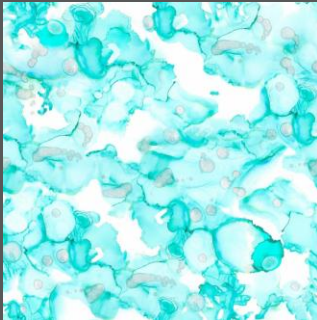


This is Peter Pan





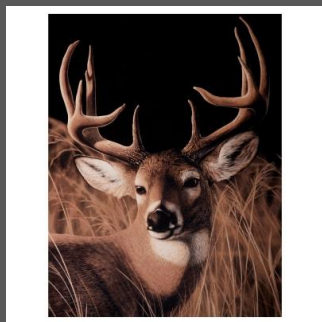
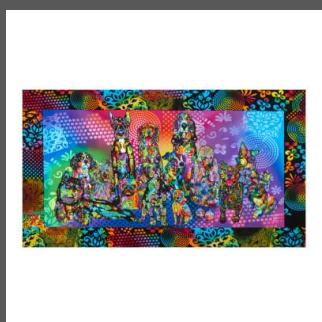
From 3 Wishes:





We're still looking for that camper fabric. It's possible I actually didn't order it.

From Print Concepts & Windham:



All Classes are on hold for right now. I will come out with a new calendar as soon as things calm down.

Nolting Longarm Machines

Nolting has 5 main machines, each with different reaches: from 17" to 30" depending on the machine. They are sold with or without a frame, but after I saw & helped set up one of the steel frames this week, I recommend buying the frame. All machines, except for the Standard--

the most economical machine-- have a stitch regulator. I recommend a stitch regulator. All machines can be equipped with a computer and there are a couple of different ones to choose from. In addition, you can get an extended table base so that you can use rulers, you can get larger bobbins on some of the models and on the frames you can get hydraulic lifts to raise and lower the tables. In the coming weeks, I will print out more information on each model.

The best entry level machine is the Fun Quilter. It comes in 17", 20" & 23" reach. It comes with the Intellistitch Equalizer stitch regulator, standard speed control, needle up/down, and fixed handles in the front & rear. This machine can also be equipped with a computer.



The Pro Machine has the Intellistitch Turbo stitch regulator, single stitch option, standard speed control, needle up/down and customizable handles in the front & rear. The Pro Machine comes in 20", 24" and 30" reach with 10-12" of inside height. There are easy dials on the front to set stitch length and other options. This machine can also be equipped with a computer.



The NV Machine is the newest in the fleet of Nolting machines. This machine has a touch screen with programmable stitch regulation. You can stitch in 4 different stitch modes plus single stitch and needle up/down. It also has an adjustable brightness LED work light. This machine can also be equipped with a computer.



Nolting also has a commercial machine with the Intellistitch Equalizer stitch regulator, standard speed control, needle up/down, and fixed handles in the front & rear. This machine can also be equipped with a computer.

Normal Shop Hours:
Monday-Saturday 10-6
Sunday 1-5
Closed first Sunday of month (and some holidays)

Covid-19 Hours
M-s 10-5. Closed Sundays

Join the fun and come feel the difference of quality fabrics.

Happy quilting!

Sincerely, Barbara Boyer
Around the Block
307-433-9555
www.aroundtheblockquilts.com