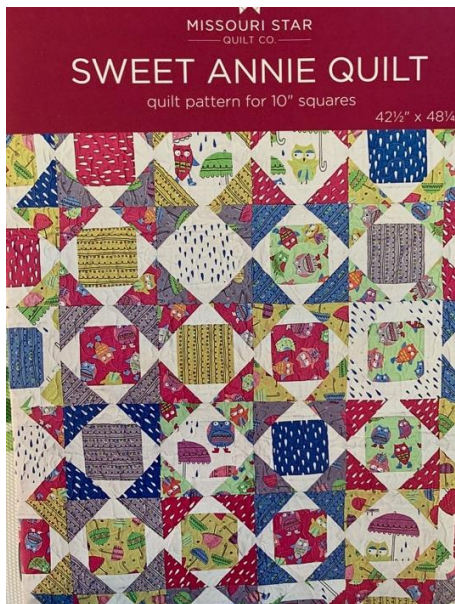


SQUARING UP BLOCKS AND A MOBILE DESIGN WALL

We Crazy Quilters are on our summer hiatus and generally I would not create an educational tidbit for July, but what else do I have going on these days? I sure miss seeing you all at quilt guild functions. I know we will get through this season and will be together again. I am really looking forward to seeing you at future Crazy Quilters Guild meetings and at the Clubhouse 4 Quilting Studio. In the mean time let's talk "Squaring up Blocks" and "A Mobile Design Wall".

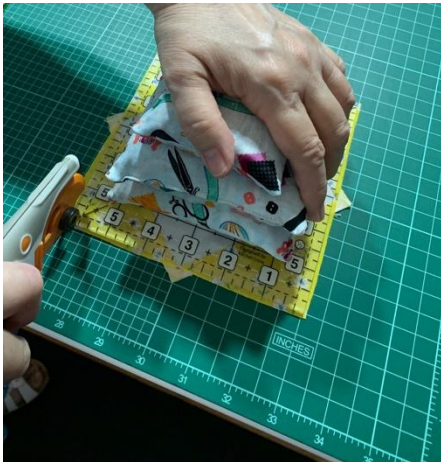
As I have mentioned in past tidbits, I use an Accuquilt Die Cutter to cut fabric or I use precut fabrics in most of my quilt projects. I have tendonitis and arthritis in my hands and if I use scissors or a rotary cutter for too long, the repetitive motion makes a mess of my hands. If I overdo it, I end up losing the use of my thumbs for about 6 weeks and have to wear awkward braces. Have you ever tried to use your hands with your thumbs taped to your palms? Not only does it hurt, but it really makes life awkward, plus no sewing; insult to injury!



Recently, I decided to sew up a Sweet Annie quilt that I had in my stack of projects. I love the look of the quilt and have made it a couple of times in the past to make small baby quilts.

This pattern features an exploding block. It requires placing one white and one print 4 ½-inch square face-to-face and then sewing them together around the perimeter. Next you draw diagonal lines across the white square, corner to corner, and carefully cut on those diagonal lines using scissors, without cutting the print square underneath. You press the resultant white triangles open and then sew a 5-inch print square around the perimeter, and do the same drawing, cutting, and pressing. The result is supposed to yield a perfectly square 6 ½-inch block.

Well, no matter how I measured, sewed, cut on the diagonal lines, and pressed open; nothing came out perfectly square, and in no way was it measuring 6 ½-inch square.



To be able to sew these blocks together into a quilt, I decided to square them up to 6 inches. It suddenly dawned on me that I was now facing the issue I mentioned in paragraph 2 above.

The Sweet Annie quilt consists of 42 blocks, 6 per row, with 7 rows total. I had 42 blocks to square up. But oh by the way, I went crazy and decided to make two quilts, so I actually had 84 blocks to square up.

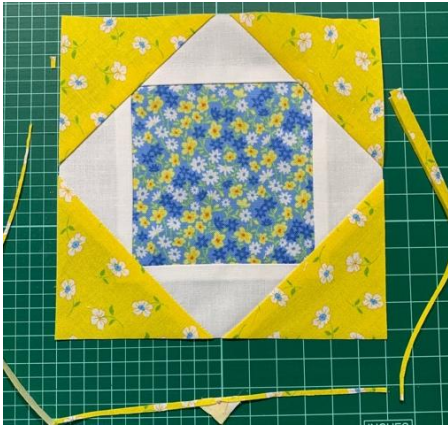
While creating the blocks, to keep my hands from having issues, I used my Accuquilt cutter to cut the $4\frac{1}{2}$ inch squares. I used my spring-loaded ergonomically correct Fiskars scissors to make the diagonal cuts and took lots of breaks to rest my hands.

Now I had this ominous squaring-up process to accomplish without doing any damage to my hands. Besides the use of the rotary cutter, the other thing that really causes problems for my hands is holding a template down so it won't move while I cut around it to square up a block. Hmmm.... what to do?

On my cutting table, I keep a stack of weights that I use to hold down rulers to be able to cut fabric. Unfortunately, they are all longer than 6 inches. Then I remembered my bean bags that I use to hold down fabric and sometimes use on square templates. Bingo! I had my solution.

I grabbed my 6-inch square template and stacked all the beanbags in the center on top of the block. Their combined weight is over 3 pounds.

I found that I could easily hold them with the palm of my hand, they held the template in place while I cut around the square template.



Voila! One 6-inch squared up block and I suffered no soreness to my hands.

Over about a week, taking my time, I got all 84 blocks squared up and no braces, yay.



This picture shows 42 blocks laid out on my design wall, ready to sew together to create one Sweet Annie quilt. After this one was sewn up, I used the design wall to lay out the second one.

Speaking of my design wall – we are finding out that living in a condo has lots of space challenges. Between windows, pictures, and wall hangings, we have run out of wall space. However, I really wanted and needed a design wall. We came up with the idea of a mobile, or removable design wall.

My design wall consists of wide drapery tape sewn on the top of one large piece of flannel. This drapery tape is generally used to contain the metal hooks that pleat the top of draperies, and it works great as the top of my design wall.



My husband hung up adhesive hooks above our sliding glass door between the molding and the vertical blinds valance.

We inserted grommets along the drapery tape at the top of the flannel to coincide with the placement of the hooks. The grommets easily slip on and off the hooks.



I can hang up my design wall when needed. When I no longer need it, I can fold it up and store it on a shelf.

Before folding it up for storage, I run it through the dryer on the "Air Dry" cycle to remove fabric debris, threads, and any dust that may have settled on it while in use.

We live on the second level of our building. Our sliding glass door leads out to our lanai balcony where we have our gas grill and outdoor furniture.

While the design wall is hanging at the sliding door, if we need to go in and out, we simply move the first grommet to the middle hook and you can come and go as you please while I still have access to my design wall.

The blinds can be opened and closed without removing the design wall.

That is all I have to share this month. I will try to be back with a new topic for August 2020. Stay safe and healthy dear friends.