The Stash Buster Challenge 2020

Our Stash Buster Block:

***Square Dance* Block Size:** 6"x 6" fin. size (6-1/2" x 6-1/2" unfin.)
All seams are 1/4" seam allowance.

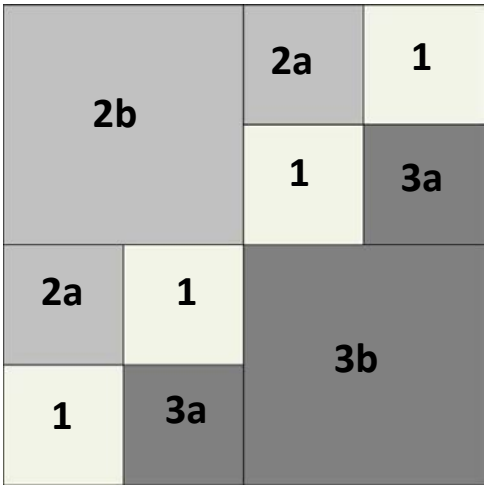
To BUST our stash each *Square Dance* block is intended to be scrappy. Just how scrappy will be up to you as the stash buster. **Why did I select this block?** There is always much debate and consideration when choosing THE block. I want the perfect one for options for lots of fabrics, as well as, wonderful quilt layouts. This block is also great for the 'non-scrappy' quilters as each fabric has a chance to be itself. Blocks can be 'matchy-poo' or not, it will not matter – so don't stress about micro managing your choice of fabrics.

IMPORTANT: The chain down the middle of each block MUST be the lightest colour or the darkest colour. One or the other but not both. This can be all the same fabric or different fabrics that read same or similar for each block. This CHAIN is important as it will form the quilt layout no matter which one you choose. Sew as many blocks as you want! Bust as much stash as you wish! You have the entire year. At the end of the year there will be a big surprise!

TIP: If the chain is light – make sure Fabric 2 and 3 are darker than it is. If the chain is dark – make sure fabric 2 and 3 are lighter than it is.

Cutting Requirements:

As you can see our block has an interesting placement for each fabric. This makes it work very well as a scrappy project. The bonus is that this is a super easy block to make!



For EACH Block:		Cut Size:
Fabric 1	Lightest Fabric (or darkest fabric)	*Cut (2) 2" x 4-1/4" pcs.
Fabric 2	Using one fabric	**2a:** Cut (1) 2" x 4-1/4" pc. **2b:** Cut (1) 3-1/2" x 3-1/2" pc.
Fabric 3	Using one fabric but different than Fabric 2	**3a:** Cut (1) 2" x 4-1/4" pc. **3b:** Cut (1) 3-1/2" x 3-1/2" pc.

*For additional cutting information for **Fabric 1**, see the TIPS on page 2.

Block Assembly:

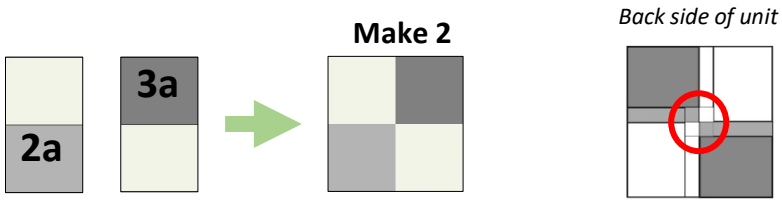
Making the 4-Patch

1. Along the length, join (1) 2" x 4-1/4" **Fabric 1 strip** to the 2" x 4-1/4" **Fabric 2a strip.** Press seam carefully to the darker fabric. This sewn strip should measure 3-1/2" wide x 4-1/4". If necessary, trim to tidy the width. Repeat for **Fabric 3a strip.**

Important: Trim to tidy the width of this sewn strip by placing the ruler along sewn seam measuring to raw edge. Use the cut width less 1/4" (for sewn seam) and trim to tidy along each raw edge. **Both fabric strips** should measure 1-3/4" wide from seam to raw edge.

2. Align ruler markings along the horizontal sewn seam to keep cuts straight (at 90-degrees) and carefully subcut each sewn strip unit into 2" x 3-1/2" sections cutting 2 units from each.

3. Join together one of each of the subcut pieces as shown below to make the *4-patch* units. When pressing this seam, twist the center of the seam allowance open, loosening the stitches of the fabric at the center seam so the intersecting seam fans out and lays flat to opposite sides. This will relieve the excess bulk at the center.

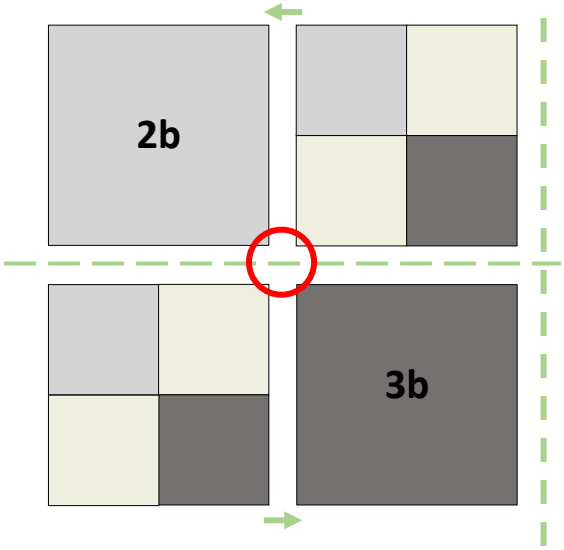


4. These sewn *4-patch* units should measure 3-1/2" x 3-1/2" unf. Trim to tidy if necessary. In this manner, continue to make (2) *4-patch* units for **each** *Square Dance* block.

TIP: If using all the same or longer pieces of different fabrics for **Fabric 1** you may wish to use the following technique to do some assembly-line sewing (I would still cut each **Fabric 2** and **Fabric 3** at the 4-1/4" length as instructed):

a) Cut **Fabric 1** the length that you wish. If you are using the same fabric cut 2" x 42" WOF strips.
b) With right sides together match the long edges and stitch to join, butting the short ends of **Fabric 2** and **Fabric 3** pieces as you make your way along the **Fabric 1** strip. Continue adding **Fabric 2** and **Fabric 3** pieces as needed for the length of the **Fabric 1** strip. **Note:** the butted ends are not sewn to each other.
c) Press seam to the darker fabric. This sewn strip should measure 3-1/2" wide after pressing. Trim to tidy if necessary.
d) Subcut into 2" units as in Step 2 above avoiding the butted ends.
e) Continue following the above steps to make the *4-patch* units for the ***Square Dance*** block as instructed.

Making the Block



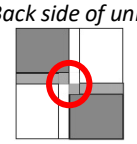
1. Referring to the block diagram, carefully lay out one of each 3-1/2" cut squares from the **2b** and **3b** fabrics.

2. Now position the **(2) *4-patch* units** making sure they are positioned correctly – they can be tricky and who wants to 'reverse sew'?

3. Using a 1/4" seam allowance, join the pieces together as shown.

4. Press seams as shown by the arrows. Where shown by the red circle, twist the center of the seam allowance open loosening the stitches of the fabric at the center seam so the intersecting seam fans out and lays flat to opposite sides. This will relieve the excess bulk.

Back side of unit



5. This *Square Dance* block should measure 6-1/2" x 6-1/2" unfinished. Trim to tidy if necessary.

6. Repeat to ***BUST THAT STASH*** and make as many blocks as you wish!

Optional Sizes:

Don't like 6" blocks?

This year I am also providing the cutting information for optional sizes. If you choose to make your blocks one of these sizes, the Challenge will still be to make a minimum of 52 blocks for the year.

You may wish to make all of your blocks at 4" fin. Size (4-1/2" unfin.) or a larger 8" fin. Size (8-1/2" unfin.). Below is the cutting information for each of these sizes.

Please note: I am not recommending mixing the 3 different block sizes for the same quilt. This will make it very complicated to assemble and will make the 'chain' loose its path!

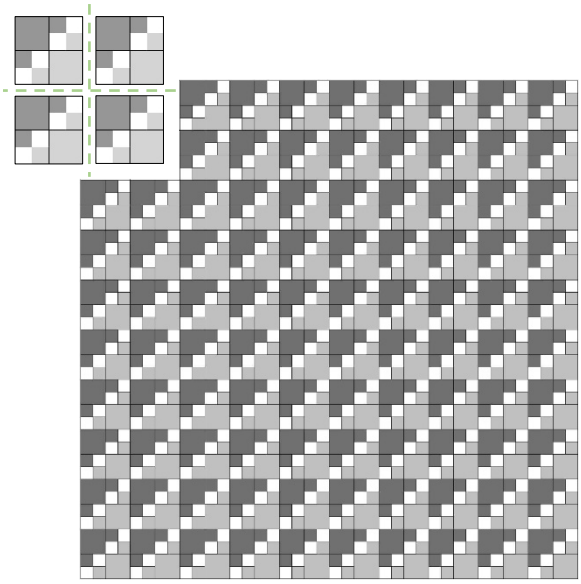
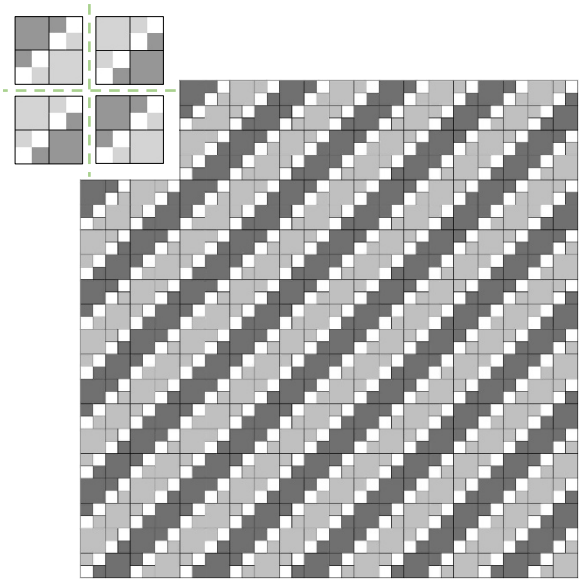
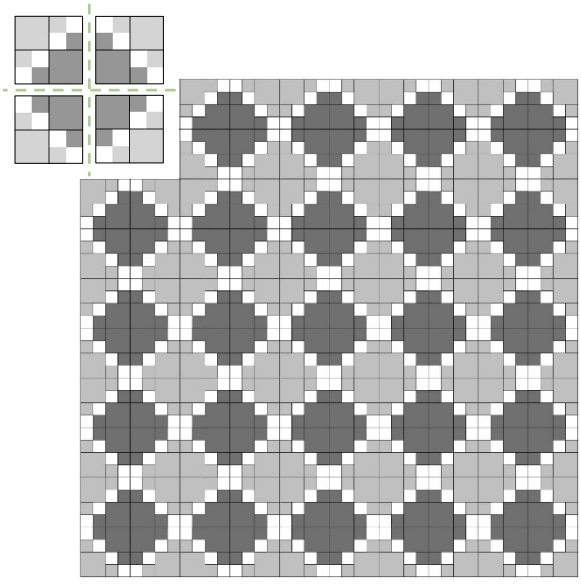
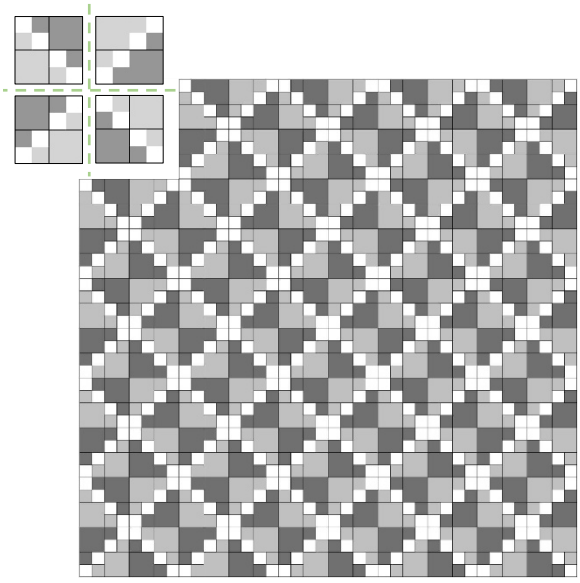
For EACH Block:		4" fin. size (4-1/2" unfin.) Cutting Requirements:	8" fin. size (8-1/2" unfin.) Cutting Requirements:
Fabric 1	Lightest Fabric (or darkest fabric)	Cut (2) 1-1/2" x 3-1/2" pcs.	Cut (2) 2-1/2" x 5-1/2" pcs.
Fabric 2	Using one fabric	**2a:** Cut (1) 1-1/2" x 3-1/2" pc. **2b:** Cut (1) 2-1/2" x 2-1/2" pc.	**2a:** Cut (1) 2-1/2" x 5-1/2" pc. **2b:** Cut (1) 4-1/2" x 4-1/2" pc.
Fabric 3	Using one fabric but different than Fabric 2	**3a:** Cut (1) 1-1/2" x 3-1/2" pc. **3b:** Cut (1) 2-1/2" x 2-1/2" pc.	**3a:** Cut (1) 2-1/2" x 5-1/2" pc. **3b:** Cut (1) 4-1/2" x 4-1/2" pc.

The Scrap Buster Quilt Layout Options:

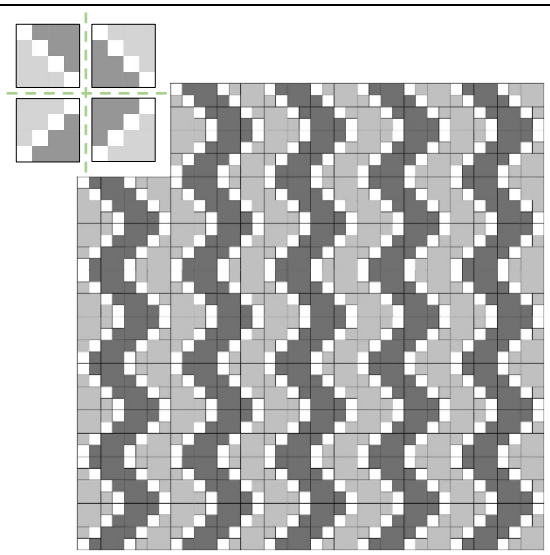
The following quilt layouts show 100 blocks (10 blocks per row wide x 10 rows long) to demonstrate the pattern formed by the positioning of this year's Challenge ***Square Dance*** block. For the 6" fin. Size block this would make a 60" x 60" finished size center. You can make your quilt any size you wish and add any borders that you wish in order to make a quilt the size that you wish!

Of course, you can always put the blocks on point too! Let's have fun!

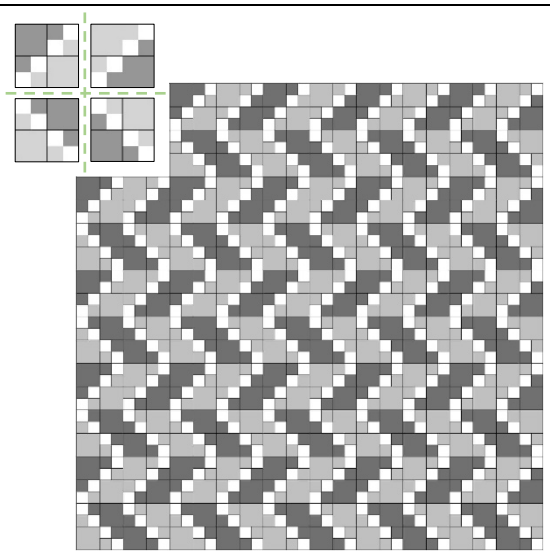
Please note: I have only used 3 shades to demonstrate these layouts but due to the nature of 'stash' fabrics and the use of medium and dark fabrics, some layouts may not be as evident in real life. The CHAIN FABRIC will make the layout pop. Audition the layout that you wish to use. I suggest taking a photo and looking at the effect of the fabric through the camera's eyes. Then change what may be necessary to have a quilt that you will love.

Layout 1: Soft Streaks	**Layout 2: Strong Streaks**
	
Layout 3: Sunshine & Shadows	**Layout 4: City Streets**
	

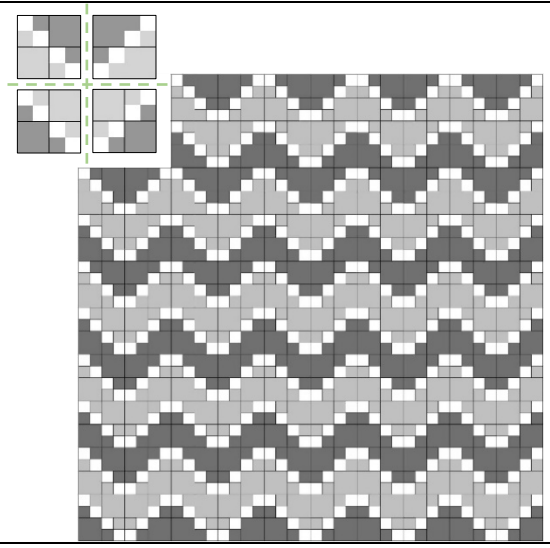
Layout 5: Field and Furrow



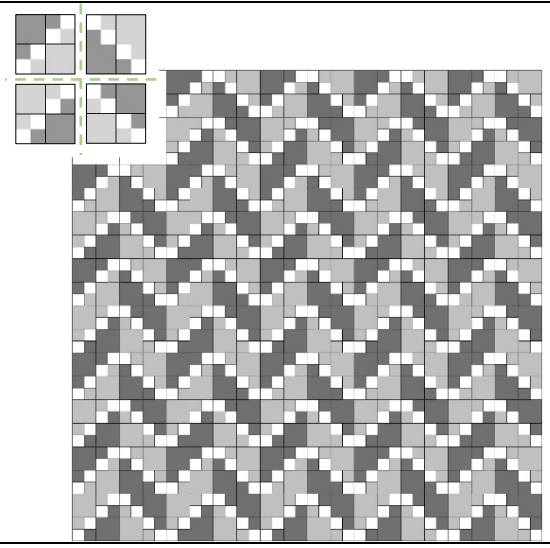
Layout 6: Broken Fields



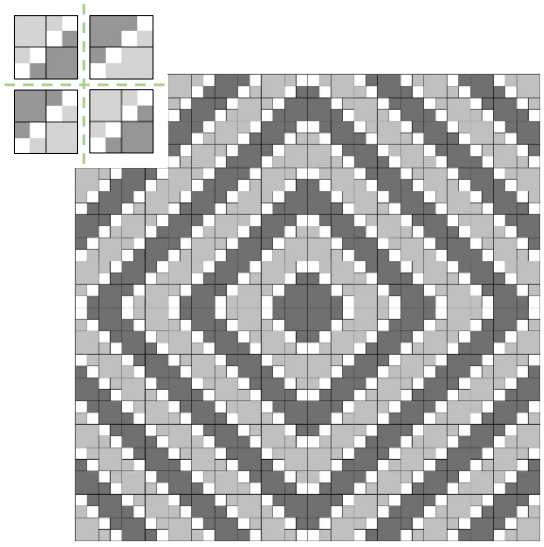
Layout 7: Hills and Valleys



Layout 8: Mountain Range



Layout 9: The Ripple Effect



Thank you for sewing along with me on this

Stash Busting adventure!