



After spending 2 weeks in Ireland in June - I KNEW - just KNEW that I wanted to do an Irish Chain variation of some kind.

It would make the perfect Leader & Ender challenge - but what?

What would make it fun, leave loads of options for others, and put good use to scraps?

We had the most beautiful weather on our trip - I'm not saying that there wasn't any rain, because there was - but there was enough rain to make us appreciate the abundant sunshine we were graced with.

So many of my photos are blue and green.

More blue and green. Even more blue and green.

And so I've had just 2 weeks to pull some scraps and get things going so I can show you just how it is going to go.



Inspiration scenery!



These are the blues and greens that inspired me - but don't let that limit you. Just choose 2 colors and a background and make your own version in your own colorway.



But it's blues & greens and neutrals for me!

Things to know:

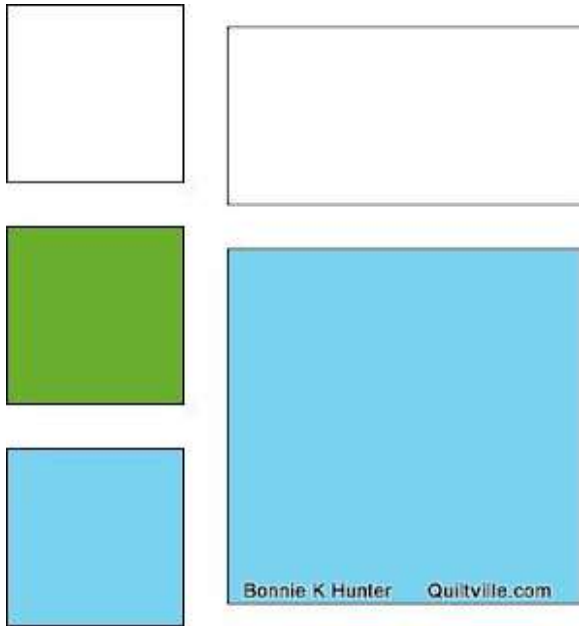
Leader & Ender challenges are given so that you have "SOMETHING" to stitch in between the lines of stitching other things.

If you have this finished in 2 weeks it doesn't count. Please play along with all of this and make it alongside the projects you are already working on. It is not a race. There is not a prize if you finish first. We won't be impressed. LOL!

I just started this project and have a handful of blocks made. It will take me until next spring to get it done, and that's the way it works.

Block quarters finish at 3". Blocks finish at 6". Change the size if you want, but I am only giving directions for one size.

Make as many or as few blocks as you would like. **Instructions are for one block.**



There are only 3 shapes to cut for the blocks.

**Neutral (Background):**

Cut 4 squares 1 1/2" and 8 rectangles 1 1/2" X 2 1/2" per block.

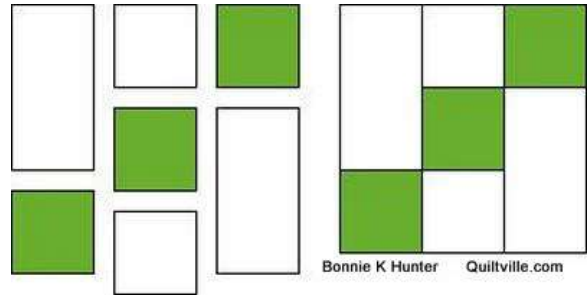
**Green:**

Cut 6 squares 1 1/2" per block.

**Blue:**

Cut 2 squares 1 1/2" and 2 squares 2 1/2" per block.

I was able to pull the 1 1/2" and 2 1/2" squares from my Scrap User's System, and then cut the neutral rectangles from 1 1/2" strips I had on hand.



Unit A - Make 2 per block.



Arrange pieces for unit A as shown. Join pieces in each column together, pressing seams toward the LIGHT fabrics. This will help with joining to the B units later.



Join columns to complete unit A.

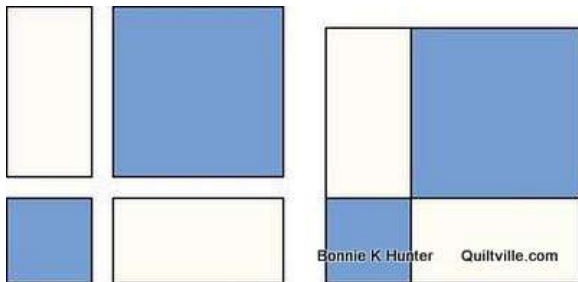
Press long seams toward the center column to facilitate nesting with unit B.



Units will measure 3 1/2" and finish at 3" in the block. Make 2 per block.



What pressing looks like on the back.



Unit B - Make 2 per block



Cut pieces ready to sew.



I was assembling these while sewing my new patriotic star on July 4th. Join units into columns, pressing seams toward the light fabrics.



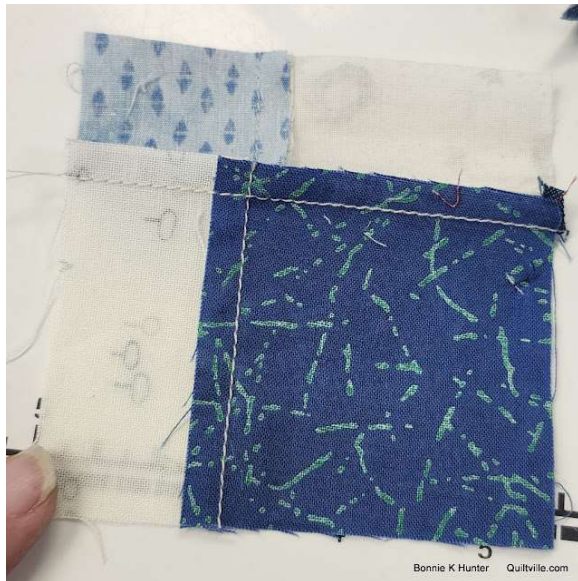
Leaders and Enders not only save thread, but they keep your chain piecing continuous so there is always something left under the presser foot to save your spot while you go press the chain that you snip off from **behind the presser foot**.

It also stops birds' nests at the beginning of seams and stops triangles from getting sucked down the needle hole.

The object is to always have some unit of some kind holding your place while you stop the chain to get to the next step.

In the above photo, I have sewn the two columns of Unit B together, and my scissors are busy snipping the star units from behind my presser foot.

Press seam out toward the neutral rectangle.



What pressing looks like from the back.

Make 2 unit B per block. Units will measure  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " and finish at 3" in the block.



Units placed in order!

Units can be joined to each other as Leaders & Enders as well.



Join units into rows. Press seams toward the green chain units.



Join block halves to complete block.



they are working well as I piece them at the same time.

What can you do with these blocks? SO MANY THINGS!

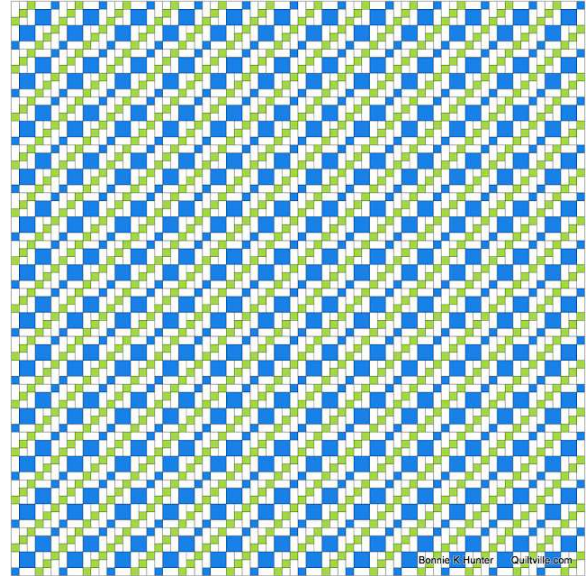
To facilitate nested seams when joining block-to-block during quilt assembly, spin-press the long seams as shown.



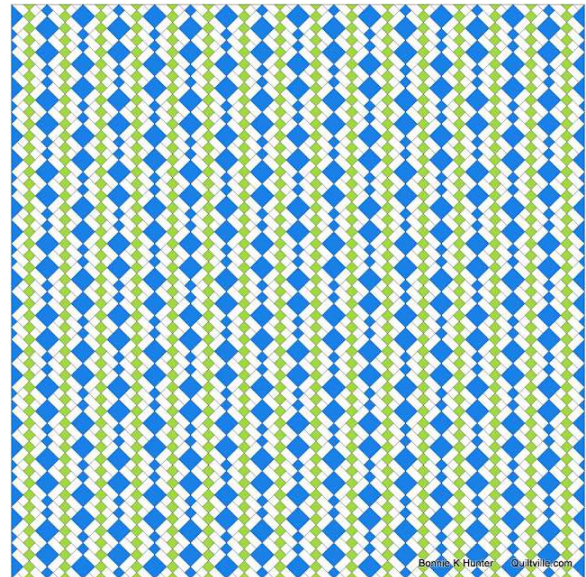
Blocks will measure 6 1/2" and finish at 6" in the quilt.



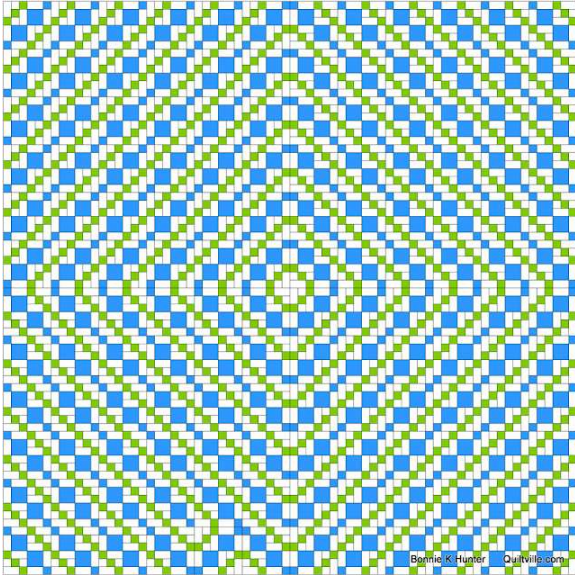
I'm finding I am assembling County Clare blocks as fast as I am making my new plaid star blocks -



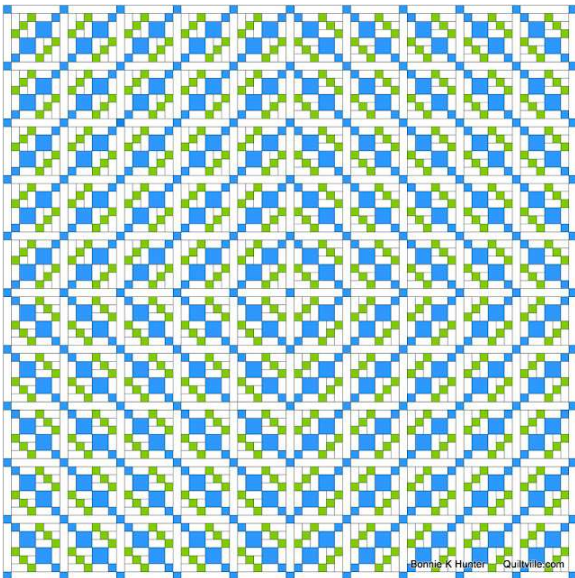
Diagonal Chains!



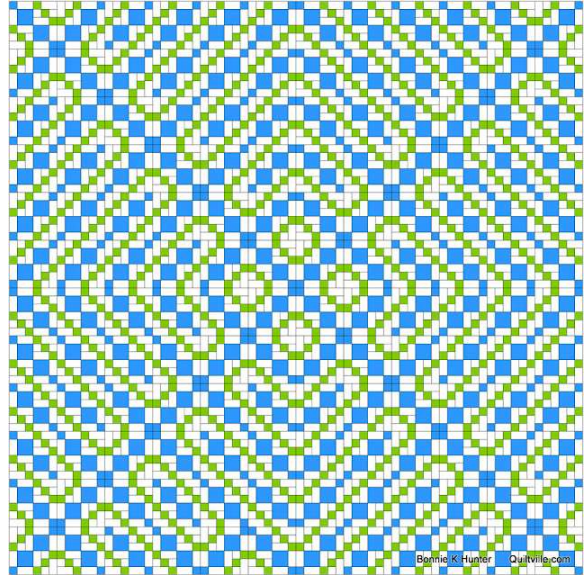
Set them on point for vertical chains.



Turn them into a Barn Raising layout.

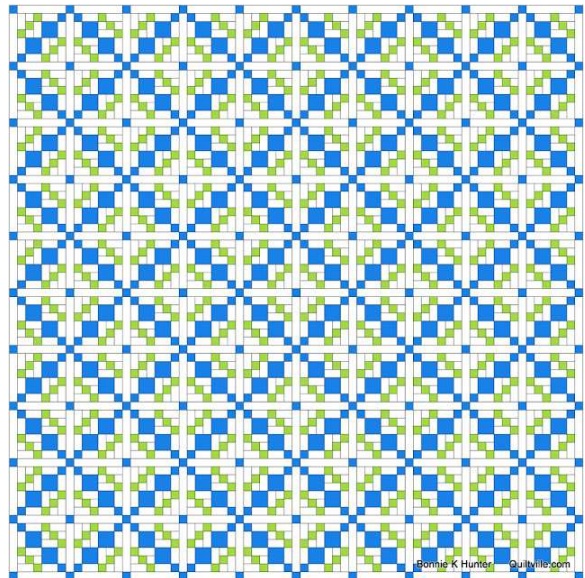


Here is the same layout with sashings and cornerstones.

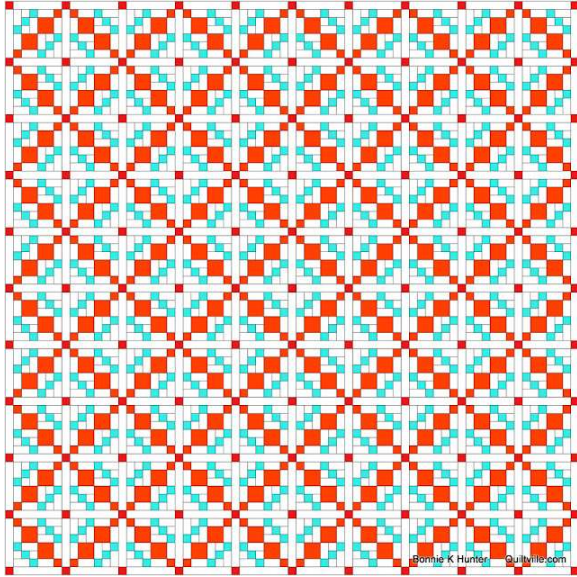


Without sashings, and some blocks turned.

(I think this one is really cool!)



Round and Round with sashings -



And just another idea in what this could look like in another colorway.

As I said - the ideas are endless.

I'm excited to be making this quilt. I love that it has an Irish Chain take to it. I can't wait to see what you do with it.

I just want to dare you to use it as a Leader & Ender project and not have it finished in 2 weeks, okay? Kay!

Can you strip piece these units? Of course. And if you decide to, you could then just do the assembly of units as Leaders & Enders. It's your project.

Could you use all one background? Yep. But I'm going scrappy because that's how I roll.

Could you do the whole quilt with only 3 fabrics? Of course.

Can you do it rainbow? Yes! I can see rainbow in place of the blues, but using one color where the greens are to give it somewhere for eyes to focus. Red would be good.

See what I mean? Endless!

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