

2018 Leader & Ender Challenge: Jewel Box Stars!



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Guess what we are making this go-round as our Leader & Ender project?



April's Antiquing with Mona on our way to Asheville!

Remember this quilt top?

"What IS it?" Mona asked. "Well, it's kind of a Jewel Box Quilt, but the triangles are turned inside out and it kind of makes stars." was my reply.

"Jewel Box Quilt? What's a Jewel Box Quilt?" Check my [Jewel Box Quilt Category on Pinterest](#) for some ideas!

The truth is, I tried to do an image search on THIS vintage variation – one I had also made as a baby quilt for my nephew Mike when he was born right at the turn of the year 2000 (Yes, it has Millennium fabric in it – and can you believe he graduated high school this year?) but I was unable to find any other photos of this inside out Jewel Box for sharing here!



Image size:
4032 x 2268

No other sizes of this image found.

Best guess for this image: *patchwork*

Yeah, thanks Google. This IS Patchwork! LOL!



Take a look at these fabrics!

1950s maybe?

When deciding what will be fun for any Leader & Ender Challenge, I take a good long look at areas of my stash that have not been moving. You know what stumps me? BIG FLORALS. I don't use a lot of them because my usual piecing is fairly small, and the big scale prints over-run the size of the patches.

Also – CHARM SQUARES. I don't personally cut and save charm squares – because they often

have to then be cut down to other sizes to use them - so it is double the cutting, double the work. I prefer to simply work from my strip widths in my Scrap User's System.

But into every quilter's life some Charm Squares of dubious prints will fall, right?



I know this is blurry – but look at the scale!

Yes, those shoes are mine – it was an accidental photo.

An idea was born, and I was off and running as soon as my own [Checkerboard Rails](#) quilt from last year's challenge was completed. No time to waste – on to the next thing!

I've been working on my blocks for our new Jewel Box Stars Challenge over the past couple of months.



Jewel Box Star Block!

NOTE I am making my blocks with 3" finished half-square triangles, and four-patches made from 2" squares from my 2" squares box for a Jewel Box Star block that finishes at 12".

You may resize this block BIGGER to use the **full size of the charm square** by making your half-square triangles 4 1/2" unfinished to finish at 4" and making your four-patches out of 2 1/2" squares for an 8" finished block quarter.

Your big block will measure 16". Your quilt, your choice!



See how easily this block comes together?

We start by making individual four-patches and half-square triangle units, stitching them into block quarters, and then the 4 block quarters are sewn together into the “Big Block.”

You may use any triangle method you wish to make the half-square triangles. I am using some 3 1/2” strips and my [Essential Triangle Tool](#), and also some charm squares, cutting 3 1/2” strips from the charm squares with the neutral and the color already matched right sides together, and then using the tool to cut my triangle pairs. That little bit of trimming from the charm square left over goes right into my string bin for more fun.

It also enables me to get rid of ALL the pinking at the edges of the charm square before cutting my triangles.

Yes, I really detest pinked edges! In fact, if you are making the larger 4" finished half-square triangles, simply place your charm squares with right sides together, cut on the diagonal and sew your pairs with a SCANT seam so you can trim all pinking off when you trim them to 4 1/2" to finish at 4" in the big block.

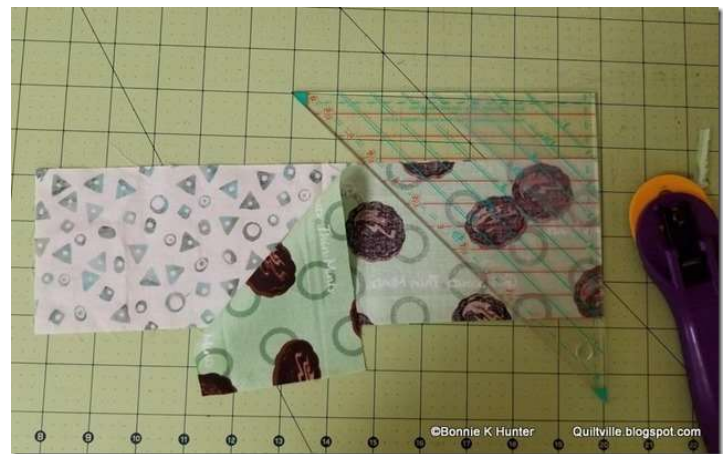
Take a good look at these blocks – do you see that the two triangles in each block quarter are MATCHING? That is what I found so charming about the antique quilt. And I’m following suit. Before I’ve mixed everything completely scrappy, but these matched triangles remind me of butterflies – and I like it.



Cutting triangle Pairs!

This Girl Scout Cookie fabric was just gifted to me while in Mississippi, and I set right in to include it in this quilt! (Yes, big novelty prints are fun mixed in with the florals – anything and everything goes!)

Place colored strip and neutral strip with right sides together.



Square off one end by placing any line at the top of the strip set. Then move the newly trimmed end to the far left as shown below:



Making the first cut.

Right handed cutting...lefties will work in mirror image cutting from the right end of the strip set.

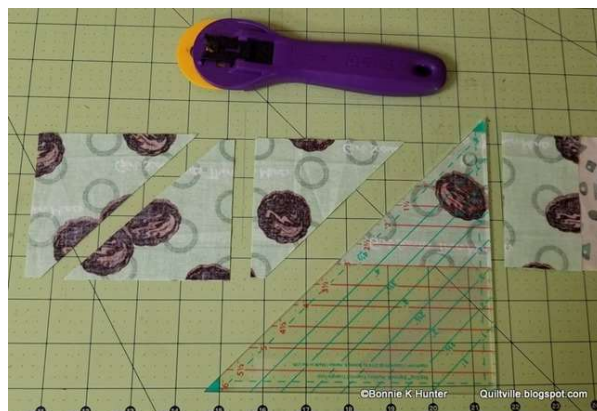
Place the 3" finished red line at the top left of the strip set and make first diagonal cut.

I find it helpful to leave my hand in place on the ruler, and move the remaining strip set a bit to my right to give a little bit of daylight between the two. This ensures that I got through all of the fabric before moving the ruler.



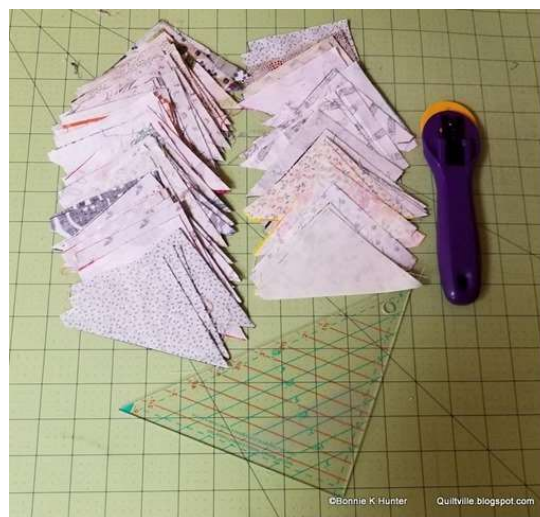
Pivot the ruler, placing the 3" line on the BOTTOM of the strip set.

The second cut will square off the end of the strip set. Working in a pivot motion, continue to cut triangles out of your strip set – remember each block takes TWO matching pairs if you are working the way I am.



I've got enough for 2 block quarters!

If I'm lucky, I can get a 1 1/2" square out of that remaining scrap of cookie fabric – I trim scraps all the way down as I go. No scrap left untrimmed in the process!



This should keep me busy for a while!



Triangle Pairs as Leaders & Enders!

The whole Leader & Ender concept is simple. Cut enough pairs (Either triangles or squares) ahead to keep you busy while you sew on whatever other project you are working on.

Instead of grabbing a folded-over-thread-covered garbage scrap, sew a pair of pieces instead. Set them aside. When you have enough build block quarters. When you have enough, build blocks. When you have enough, build a quilt! It takes no time at all and it grows in between your other projects all throughout the year.

****This is where my usual disclaimer comes in!**** If you finish this quilt in 2 weeks, quilted, bound and labeled, I will consider it cheating and you will have to start another Leader & Ender project as penance!

This project is to GROW SLOWLY in between the lines of chain piecing other things. Don't rush through it. Enjoy the process!



Press and measure, trim as needed.

Mine measure 3 1/2" with little trimming more than dog ears. Adjust your seam allowance to give you the correct unit size.



Four-patches as Leaders & Enders!

As always - seam test, seam test! Two 2" squares sewn right sides together and pressed should measure 3 1/2" on the ruler. Adjust seam allowance to achieve unit size before continuing. Because four-patches have MORE SEAMS than half-square triangles, they tend to shrink more if your seam is too wide. ADJUST ADJUST ADJUST for UNIT SIZE, not seam allowance width. Measure the unit. Not the seam.

Pressing is important with this block. When sewing your four-patch pairs together at the end of piecing (Diamond Tile block in progress!) Make SURE that your dark square on the top layer goes under the presser foot first, and that your top seam allowance is pointing up toward the needle (Pressed to the dark.) This will

ensure that all of your four-patches will spin the same way.

Spinning is important in the assembly of this quilt, and we will be doing it in a couple of different places. Four-patch units will be joined with other four-patch units and we don't want seams that fight.



Hold the four-patch this way – center seam side ways.



Hold the right side of that center seam DOWN.

Lift the left side of that center seam UP!

You are not pressing the seams OPEN...you are reverse pressing the left side of the unit. See the four-patch in the middle? You should not have to pick out any stitches. No seam ripper or scissors required...just hold down the right side with your thumb and lift both layers of the left and feel those couple of stitches in the center just open. Then press!

ANOTHER NOTE If you were chain sewing your 4 patch pairs, and your pairs are still connected to each other with chaining stitches, you will need to clip the chaining stitches so that the seam allowances have room to move.



Traditional Jewel Box Placement.

Dark triangles to the corners.



Jewel Box Stars placement.

Dark Triangles to the Center as a “butterfly!”



Spin these seams too!



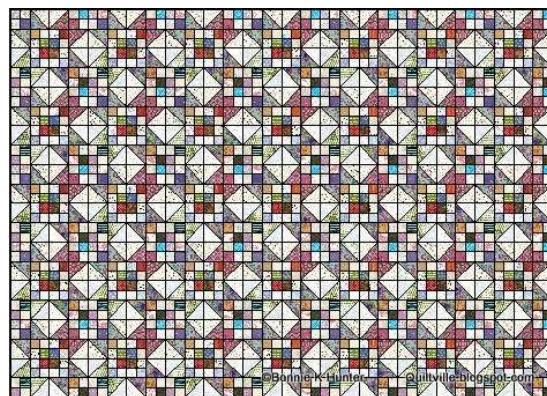
The cabin design wall is looking quite colorful!

Can you see that I've used big and splashy neutrals for the backgrounds of the half-square triangles, too?? These were prints that I usually have a hard time finding a place for when units are small. but they are FUN here!

Because I am spinning my seams all in the same direction on each block quarter, these will nest together nicely. So be consistent with how you sew – make sure you make every block in the same rotation.

How big am I going??

I have 16 retreat beds to cover with twin quilts. Maybe I'll be able to make TWO of these this year. One as Jewel Box Stars, and perhaps another as regular Jewel Box? We shall see!



TWIN SIZE!

This is 35 12" blocks set 5 X 7. Borders will be added.

However you decide to make your quilts – be it table runner, wall hanging, up to king bed size – the choice is up to you. Just cut enough pieces to get started. Build these on the side while working on other things. And watch it grow over the coming year.

I hope you'll be joining me for this year's Quiltville Mystery!

Our yardage requirements, colors and background information will be posted by Halloween. Our first clue goes live on Black Friday, the day after our Thanksgiving here in the USA. It's a wonderful way to sew with others while keeping ourselves toasty warm inside.

Of course, follow my blog Quiltville's Quips & Snips at Quiltville.blogspot.com where I post daily of things going on in my ever quilty life.

You can also find me here:

Instagram: [@Quiltville_Bonnie](https://www.instagram.com/Quiltville_Bonnie)
Facebook: [Facebook.com/QuiltvilleFriends](https://www.facebook.com/QuiltvilleFriends)
And my Facebook group: Quiltville's Open Studio.

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