North Pittsburgh Stay-at-Home Row Quilt
Part 5: Trees

Hello Everyone! Welcome to the fifth installment of this row quilt. I hope it's fun. (And not too frustrating. No one needs extra frustration just now!)

I have repeated the housekeeping notes from the first four installments below, in case you want a refresher or are starting new. (The repeated part is now in italics.) If you don't need them, go ahead and skip to page 2 to begin the blocks.

First, some housekeeping:

1. I have done my best to write correct and clear instructions, but if you find a mistake or have any questions, please let me know at skoequilt@aol.com.

2. Fabric requirements: This quilt is meant to be scrappy. Very scrappy. Every block in it can be different. For example: there are 6 flower blocks in there and every one of them can be made with different fabrics. This is a make-do quilt.
For that reason, there are no overall yardage requirements given except for the sashing (5/8 yard), border (1 yard) and binding (3/8 yard). *And if you want to scrap them up too, that's OK!*

3. I have included two sets of instructions. You can choose what you want to go with.

*The **first** set is how I would make the blocks. If you have another way that you are comfortable with, by all means use that. Personally, I struggle with accuracy with any block that has a diagonal seam in it, which, face it, is just about every block in this quilt. No matter how careful I try to be, I end up distorting that diagonal seam and my block is never ever square. My solution to this situation is to make all my units a little bit bigger than they need to be and trim them down to size after I've sewn that diagonal seam. So that is the way I have written the first (main) set of instructions. I hope you find them helpful.*

*The **second** set is the Alternate Instructions. Generally, they are a little wonkier, maybe a little more free-form, than the first, more traditional, instructions. If you think you may be interested in the second set, read the whole thing before you begin as they will often have different cutting directions and fabric requirements.*
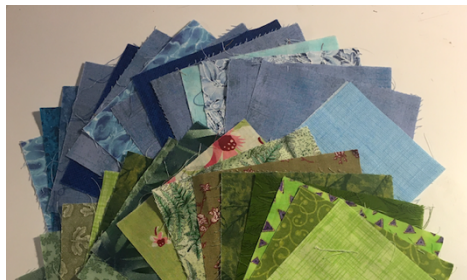
4. The overall quilt size is 46 inches by 63 inches, including the 5-inch border. All the blocks are 3-inch, 6-inch or 9-inch. If you want the finished quilt to be a different size, you can add or subtract blocks or leave out or repeat rows or make the sashing and borders different sizes.
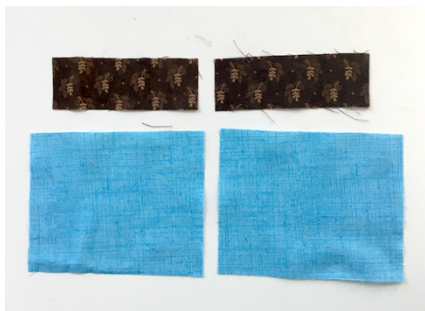
Row 4: Trees

This row has four 9-inch blocks in it: Two of the blocks are tree blocks, with two trees in each block. The other two blocks are sets of houses. This week we are only doing the tree blocks.

Something to notice: I have used a wide variety of lights and darks in my blocks, making them very 'energetic.' You may choose to use less variety, which would make your blocks calmer and neater, perhaps. Just sayin'……
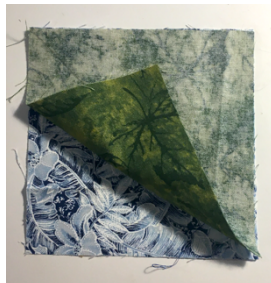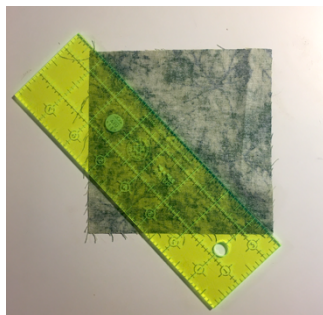

1. The trees are made from half square triangles, which will be trimmed down to 2 ¾ inches. There are lots of ways to make half square triangles. Using the method below, you will need 12 squares of tree color/s and 12 squares of background/sky color/s. The squares should be about 3 ½-inches. (Mine are bigger, because that's what I had.)

2. You will also need fabric to make the tree trunks and backgrounds.

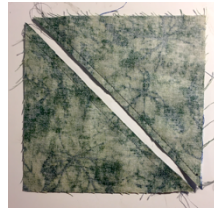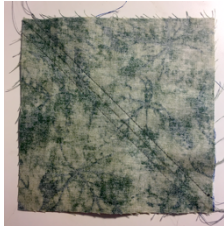The backgrounds are about 4 ½ inches by 5 inches.
The trunks are 1 ½ inches by 4 ½-inches.

IMPORTANT: The picture shows 2 of each, which is what you will need for one block. But you will be making 2 blocks, so you will need **4 of each**.
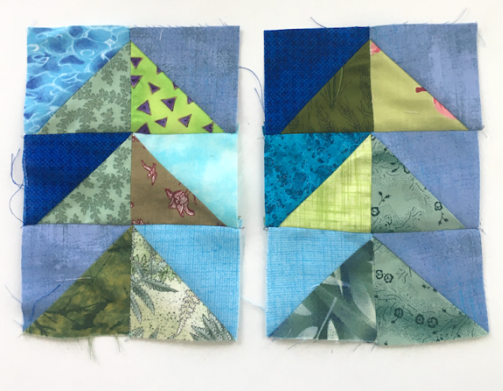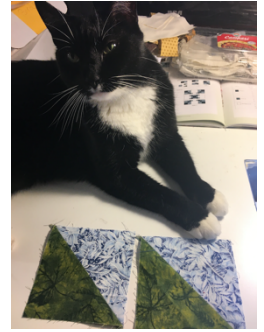

3. To make half square triangles:
- Draw a diagonal line from corner to corner on the back of one of your squares. You only have to draw on the back of half of your squares. I'm using a 'tree' square.
- Pair this square with another (in this case, a 'background/sky' square), right sides facing.

- Sew ¼-inch on either side of the drawn line.
- Cut on the drawn line.
- Press open, avoiding the cat, if possible, and trim down to 2 ¾ inches.

You now have 2 half square triangles. Repeat 11 more times to get a total of 24 half square triangles.

3. Pick 12 of the half square triangles for one block.
Each tree is made of 3 paired half square triangles units.
Each block has 2 trees, therefore 12 half square triangles in 6 pairs.
Go ahead and sew each tree together. Then STOP!!!
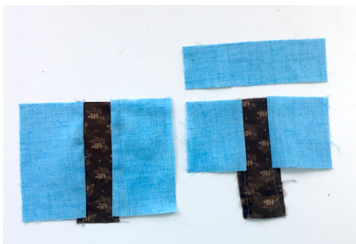Don't sew the 2 trees together yet!

4. Look at the block again. The trees do not align perfectly…it makes them a little more 'energetic.' (If you have had more than enough energy, thank you very much, you can ignore this section and skip to the trunk insertion part without cutting the strip.)

We're going to work on the trunks and spacing before we sew the two trees together into one block.

5. Get your trunks and backgrounds you cut out. You're going to do some additional cutting.
- Cut one of the background/sky squares in half vertically. One of the trunk s will be inserted in there.
- BEFORE you cut the other background/sky in half vertically, cut off about a 1 ½-inch strip horizontally across its top.
- THEN cut what's left in half vertically.

6. Rearrange the pieces so you have two trunk-and-background units with that extra strip left over. Go ahead and sew the trunk-backgrounds together. Yes, the one trunk is too long….we'll fix that later.

7. Line up the units you just made and the strip and the tree/triangle units up into 2 half blocks like the photo to the left. Stitch them together into 2 half blocks but DO NOT SEW THE 2 HALVES TOGETHER YET.

FIRST trim each half down to 5-inches wide.

THEN sew the 2 halves together and trim the whole thing to 9 ½ inches square. This is where you get rid of the extra trunk.

Make 2 of these. Voila!

Wonky Trees

This row has four 9-inch blocks in it: Two of the blocks are tree blocks, with two trees in each block. The other two blocks are sets of houses. This week we are only doing the tree blocks.

Something to notice: On the wonky trees, I've used one background fabric and one tree fabric. This sort of emphasizes the wonky shapes, but you don't have to do it this way.

These blocks are made from a variation on flying geese units, not the half square triangle units used above.
Something else to notice: Some of the points on the sides of the flying geese are cut off. Some of the points on the tops of the flying geese are cut off. Decide how you feel about that now, because there will be places in the instructions where you need to tweek things a little bit to get the effect you like.

1. Measurements here are approximations. The pieces will be cut down a good bit as they are assembled. Like all the other wonky styles in this series, the wonky factor needs room to maneuver, takes more fabric.
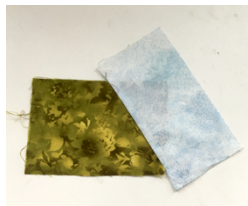
To make 2 blocks you will need:
- Twelve 4-inch by 6-inch rectangles of tree fabric
- Twenty-eight 6-inch by 3 ½-inch rectangles of background fabric. Yes, you're right, you only need 24 for the trees…the other 4 are for the trunk backgrounds. Set them aside for later.
- Four 1 ½-inch by 4-inch rectangles of trunk fabric

2. Lay a background (bkg) piece over one upper corner of a tree piece, approximately where the usual seam on a flying goose would be.
NOTICE: This piece goes from the top of the 'tree' and goes to the lower right side. When this is sewn, the sky will not go all the way to the bottom of the tree fabric. Which, depending on what else you do to the block, may cut off your side point. If you know that will bother you, change the angle of the sky fabric so it ends on the bottom of the tree fabric, not the side.

3. Stitch with a ¼-inch seam (or there-abouts.)
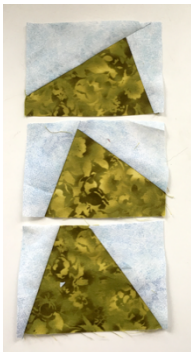4. Press toward the corner.

5. Turn the whole thing over and trim the bkg/sky even with the tree. You can also trim off the tree fabric that is now under the bkg/sky to help reduce bulk.

6. Then repeat for the other half of the goose.
NOTICE: The left side angle is REALLY flat. Stitch your piece on at a more vertical angle if this is not your cup of tea!
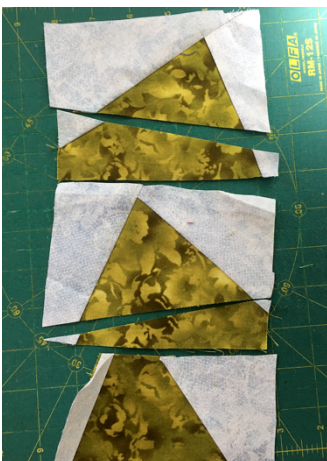
7. Repeat this process until you have 12 flying geese-ish units.

8. Pick out 3 units you want to put into one tree. You can kind of audition them around till you find an arrangement that you like. BUT keep in mind that they are going to be further wonk-i-fied, so they won't look exactly like your audition.
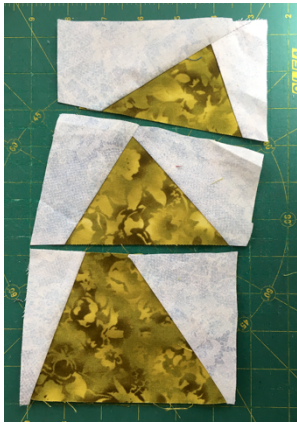
Here are my three. Notice that my top 2 are missing side points and the bottom one is missing the top point. (That happened because I did not cross the 2 seams in the center at the top…both angles were very vertical)
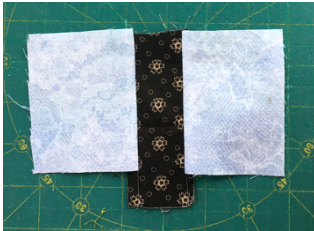
But it might not stay that way.

If I sewed these pieces together just as we see them, two things would happen. First, the two seams between the three geese would be straight horizontal seams…i.e. no wonk. Second, the block would be too long…remember how big the cut pieces were?

So we've got some more work to do! We're going to add wonk and shorten the block up in one move.
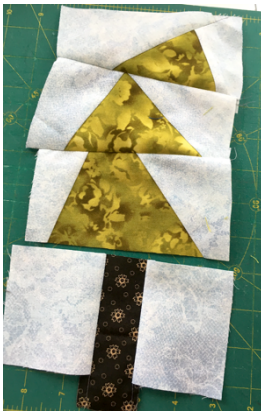
9. Again there is some auditioning needed to figure out where you would like to trim and angle the seams to shorten and wonk-i-fy. This is kind of a guess at first, altho you'll get better with some practice.

I chose to take something off the bottom of the top 2 geese, but you can just as well take something off of the top of the bottom 2 geese.

Make the trunk sections by cutting the 4 extra bkg/sky rectangles in half vertically and inserting the trunks in the cut, just like in the traditional version.
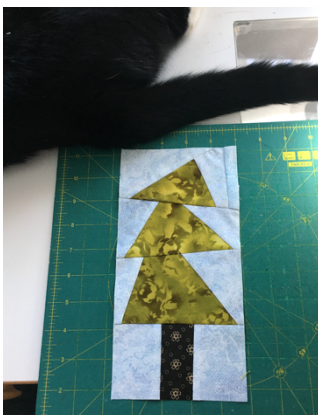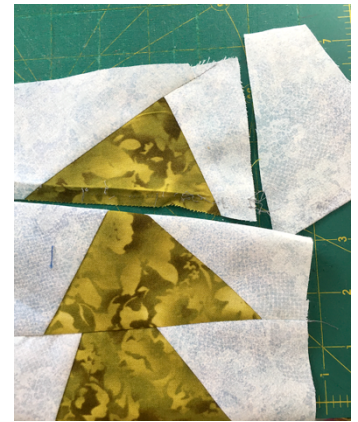
Now we put together a tree…

UH-OH…. Wonky is fun, but this is too much for even me….I kind of like the law of gravity to still be in effect.

What to do? What to do?

A wonky fix! At right, I picked out the seam between the top and middle geese, pulled the top goose to the left enough that the wonk-i-ness was within my tolerance level, and added in a scrap of background that was laying around on the table to fill in the hole. And stitched it all back together. Fixed!!!

10. Trim each tree down to 4 ½-inches by 9 ½-inches. Try to avoid trimming the cat's tail….
These look kind of wild and wooly while you're making them, but they clean up pretty nice!

11. Stitch the trees together in pairs to make the 2 blocks.

And there you have it!