

Semaphore Flags

DESIGNED AND MADE BY PAM ROCCO

“Keep it simple.” Pam Rocco of Santa Cruz, California, says these words to herself all the time based on her experience that the simplest way to solve a problem is usually the best way. Rocco made *Semaphore Flags* inspired by the quilts of the late Rosie Lee Tompkins, but found the art of simplicity is not as easy as it looks.

Challenge yourself to keep things simple when making your own version of *Semaphore Flags*. Our pattern calls for fabric according to value, not color. Rocco used a limited palette: neutrals in black, dark gray, tan, cream and white; warm tones of yellow, gold, pumpkin, orange and red; and a few teal patches for contrast. Deciding on a limited palette at the beginning will allow, and even encourage, you to put your focus on composition.

Fabric quantities called for in this pattern are approximate. Allow yourself some flexibility in your design and cut a few more patches than what we specify. Then when you make your units, focus on the effects you get pairing different colors. Experiment with how the value of a fabric changes depending on which fabric you place next to it and how that affects your design.



MATERIALS AND CUTTING

Requirements are based on 42" fabric width. Pattern has been simplified for ease of construction. Read entire pattern before cutting fabric.

QUILT SIZE: 41" x 43½"

MATERIALS	YDS.	CUTTING
Light Solids	¾	2 strips 7½" x 42", 8 A, 7 B, 2 C, strips for sashing
Med. Solids/Prints	½	14 A, 6 B, 4 C, 2 D, 2 E, strips for sashing
Dark Solids	½	6 A, 13 B, 2 C, 2 D, 2 F, strips for sashing
Tan Solid	½	2 strips 7½" x 42"
Binding	⅓	5 strips 2¼" x 42"
Backing	2¾	2 horizontal panels 25" x 45"
Batting		45" x 48"

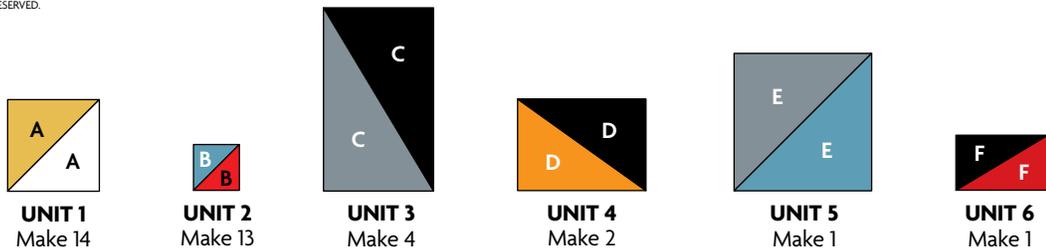
TECHNIQUES USED: improvisational piecing, machine piecing, machine quilting

You can approach making this quilt in a few different ways. You can follow the pattern, cutting patches as listed in the materials and cutting box and shown in the rotary diagrams and being specific with your measurements. Or you can use the measurements given as guidelines but cut patches and trim units to the size you prefer. In the pattern we give uniform patch measurements, but there are slight variations among the units in Rocco's quilt.

You might even choose to skip the materials and cutting box altogether and only use the rotary cutting and unit

diagrams as suggestions. Go into your stash as Rocco did and start cutting and stitching triangles of different sizes, trimming them to the sizes you want as you go. Whatever approach you choose, make *Semaphore Flags* in the simplest – and therefore best – way that works for you.

You can read Rocco's full column, "Words to Quilt By," in the December/January 2013 issue of *Quilters Newsletter*. *Semaphore Flags* was machine quilted by Linda Barbin of Hollister, California. ▶



ASSEMBLY

1 Wash, starch and press fabrics. Cut the patches and 7½" x 42" strips listed in the materials and cutting box and shown in the rotary cutting diagrams. Wait to cut strips for sashing until you piece the blocks.

2 Referring to the quilt photo for fabric placement and to the unit diagrams, join the patches indicated to make units 1-6. Make the number of units indicated by the diagrams or as desired.

3 Study the quilt photo and quilt assembly diagram, making note of the various ways Pam Rocco joined units of different shapes and sizes. Arrange 2 or more units following one of Rocco's examples or as desired in a small grouping. When you are satisfied with the arrangement, join the units to make a block center. Cut sashing strips from a contrasting or complementary fabric and join them to the sides, top and bottom of the block center to make a block. Make 9 blocks with differing configurations of units and widths of

sashing strips. Note that Rocco joined three rounds of sashing strips around the center of one of her blocks.

4 On a design wall or flat surface, arrange the blocks in 3 rows of roughly equivalent lengths. When you are satisfied with the arrangement, trim or add sashing strips to the blocks as necessary to bring them to the same height within each row. Join the blocks into rows then join the rows, again trimming or adding sashing strips to bring the rows to equal lengths. Return the quilt top to your design wall.

5 Referring to the rotary cutting diagram, cut 4 G's from a tan solid strip, cut 4 G's from a tan solid strip and set them aside. Referring to the quilt assembly diagram, measure the width of the middle block in the top row. From the tan solid strip, cut a patch the same width as the block plus ½" for seam allowances and position it on your design wall above the middle block. In a similar fashion, measure the width of the left-hand block in

the top row. From a light solid 7½" x 42" strip, cut a patch the width you just measured plus ½" for seam allowances and position it on your design wall above the left-hand block. Repeat for the right-hand block in the top row. Join the light solid patches and tan solid patch to make a border then join it to the top of the quilt.

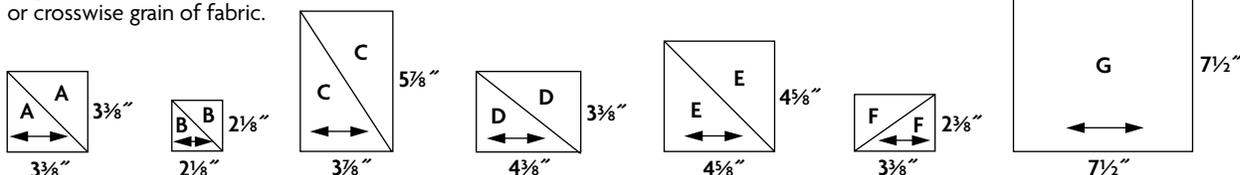
In the same fashion, cut patches from the tan solid and light solid 7½" strips to match the widths of the blocks along the bottom of the quilt, adding ½" for seam allowances. Join the patches to make a border then add it to the bottom of the quilt.

Measure and cut patches to match the heights of the blocks along the sides of the quilt. Join the patches into borders. Add a G to each end of these borders then join the borders to the sides of the quilt.

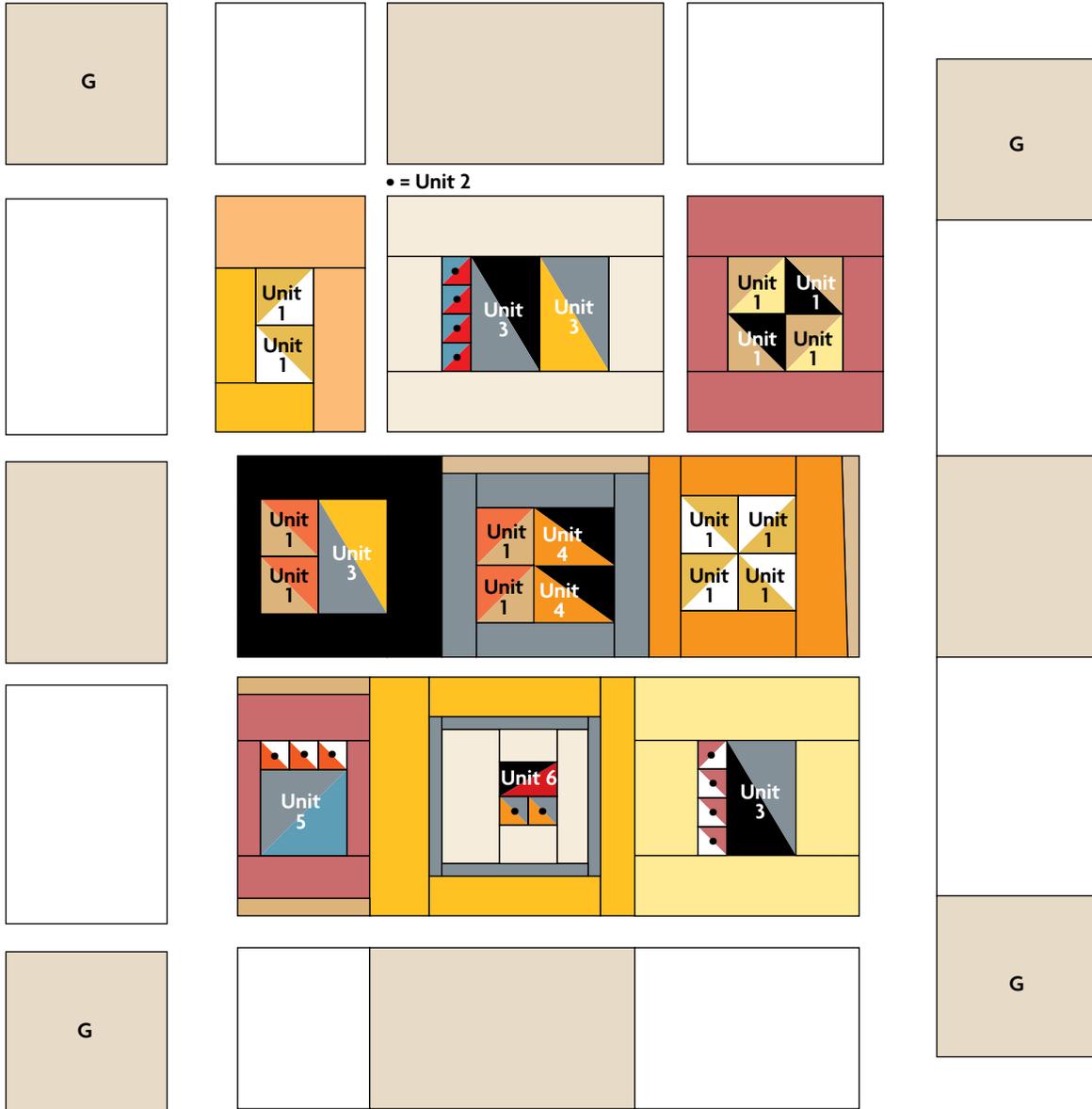
6 Layer the backing, batting and quilt top. Baste. Quilt an all-over design or quilt as desired. Bind the quilt to finish. ▶

ROTARY CUTTING

Measurements include ¼" seam allowances. Align arrows with lengthwise or crosswise grain of fabric.



FREE PATTERN



QUILT ASSEMBLY