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TUMBLING BASKETS (36" x 36")

Since the early 1800s, when basket patterns first appeared, the basket as a theme has appealed to generations of quilters who have played with the shape of the base, altered or omitted the handle, filled the basket with flowers or fruit, pieced it all, appliquéd it all, or combined the two. Many of these variations have acquired duly recorded names, and now, in the best quilting tradition, I offer a new version that I call "Basket of Scraps." The basket, cut from Crazy Puzzle fabric, is composed of 3 triangles pieced into the background. Basket handle, flowers and leaves are appliquéd. Instead of using scraps in a helter-skelter fashion, I sorted them into color groups, and assigned each of the 6 baskets a different color scheme. After fringing and shagging, the oval and circular flowers were gathered around cardboard templates, and the templates were removed before the flowers were stitched to the background. "Tumbling Baskets" contains one 12" block, two 10" blocks, two 8" blocks, and one 6" block. The Crazy Puzzle border is 3" wide.



Stanley Papich

Colette Wolff, a resident of Manhattan, is a quilter, a quilting teacher, a writer and the owner of a mail-order company offering patterns for dolls, toys and quilted items. She is currently at work on a book, *Fabric In*

Relief, to be published in 1989 by Robbie Fanning's new enterprise, the Open Chain publishing company, which will focus on books featuring needlework projects for the sewing machine. Colette has planned her

four-part "New Directions" series exclusively for readers of *Quilting USA/Canada*. The next installment will feature rotary-cut strip piecing using innovative three-dimensional techniques.

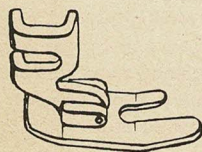
NEW DIRECTIONS: The Ultimate Thrifty Quilter

by Colette Wolff

Quilmaking generates scraps. Quilters save scraps that are big enough to use for future projects, but then there are the scraps that are too small for any imagined purpose — waste fabric too odd-shaped for any standard patch, cutaways too little for seaming into piecework fabric. These scraps are tossed out, except in my workroom.

Under my sewing table I have a tall container with a lid where I deposit leftovers that are too bitsy for storage with my regular stash of folded fabric, but substantial enough for certain applications. I use my horde to make something out of next to nothing, and the activity satisfies my quilter's soul in a way that cutting into yardage never can. This parsimonious passion has led me into uses for what quilters ordinarily discard that I laugh at myself for. On the other hand, I thoroughly enjoy the process; and at the finish, I relish the reaction of other quilters who are amazed at the origin of the intriguing effect.

Crazy Puzzle, Shag and Thread Fringe, my three super-thrifty techniques, are machine-accomplished. To do as I do, you'll need an accumulation of multi-colored, multi-patterned scraps. Fit your machine with a straight stitch foot, which has a small toe on



Straight
stitch
presser
foot.

the right side, and a straight stitch needle plate, which has a hole rather than a slot for the needle to pass through (you cannot zigzag with these attachments on your machine). You'll also need a sharp scissors with blades 2" - 3" long.

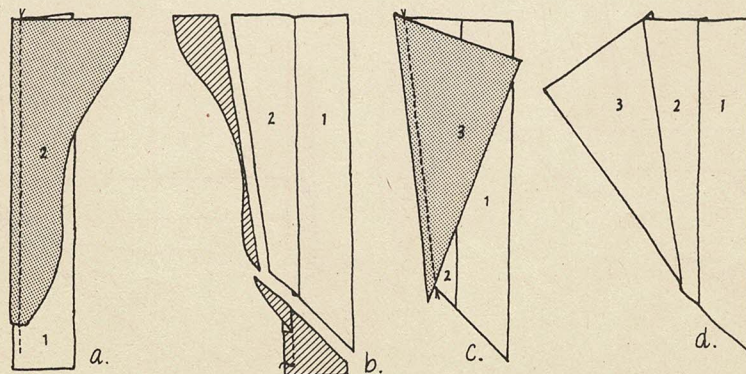
CRAZY PUZZLE

Spread a handful of cutaways, trimmings, and other waste fabric scraps beside your sewing machine. Remove scraps that aren't 100% or mostly cotton. Thread your machine with any color bobbin and spool that's left-over or handy. To prevent seams from pulling out at the ends, balance machine stitch length with tension to produce small, tight stitches. Set up an ironing board, with steam iron ready for action. Press rumples up.

Find two scraps which match up with each other on one side. With right sides facing, seam the scraps together using the small toe of the presser foot as a seam allowance guide (seam allowance will be $\frac{1}{8}$ "). Press the seam allowance to one side. Find another scrap with one side that matches any one side of

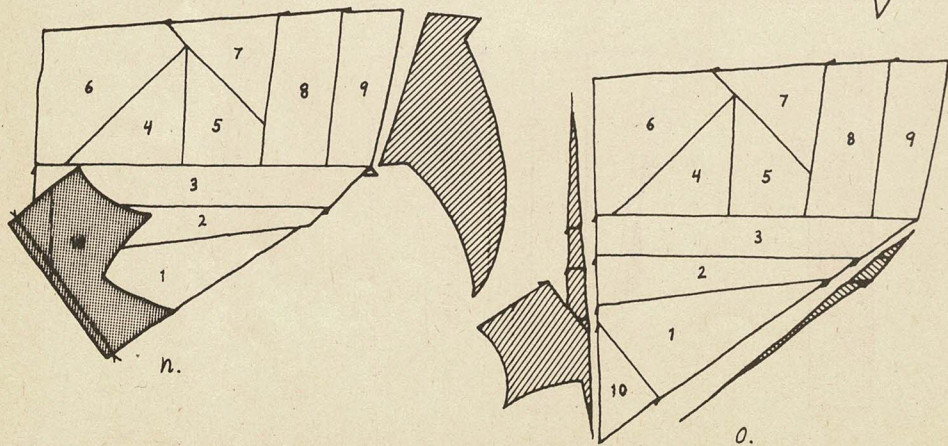
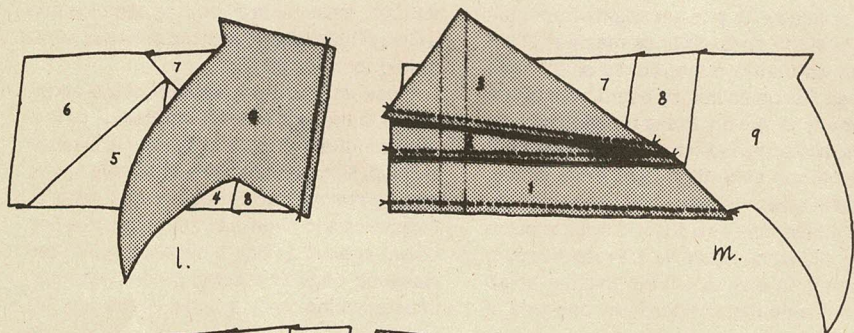
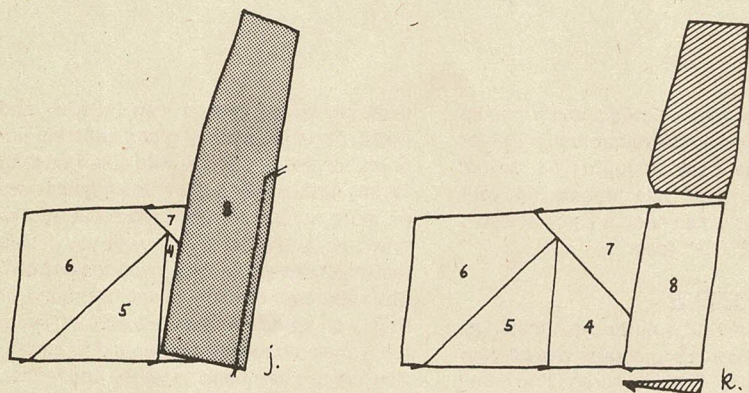
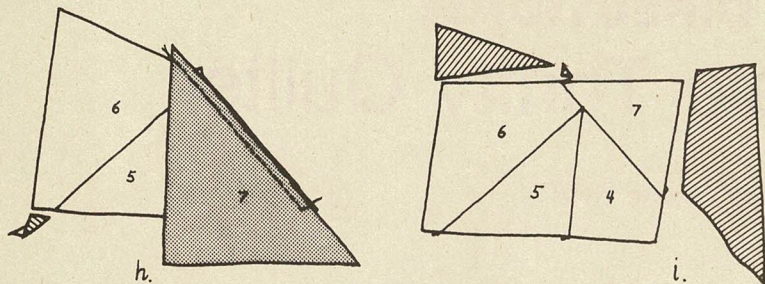
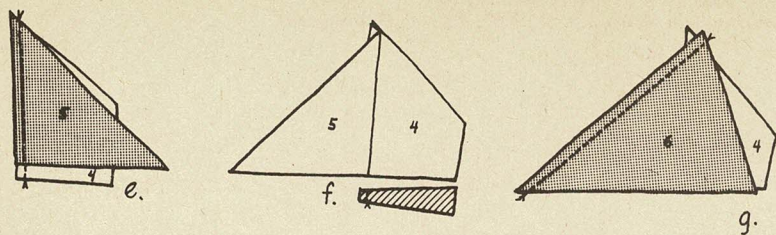
what you've just pieced; sew together and press. Continue matching and seaming until you've pieced a shape with sides too long for any further matchups. Piece together two or more scraps to add onto what you've previously pieced, and go on until you decide that matchups are becoming too complicated. Then start over-developing another shape, or fragment, sizing it so that one side will eventually match one side of your first fragment. Sew the two fragments together, and repeat, and repeat, until you've created a good-sized chunk of Crazy Puzzle. If that's not large enough, make other chunks to combine into a Crazy Puzzle fabric with the dimensions required for your project.

Press as you work, ironing seam allowances to the side of least resistance, or in a direction that will minimize seam allowance buildup. Crazy Puzzle should always steam press perfectly flat. Straighten the sides of fragments and chunks by trimming on a line drawn against a ruler. If necessary, trim the wavering edge of a scrap before seaming; after seaming, trim a scrap that's too big



Steps in the building of a Crazy Puzzle fragment.

NEW DIRECTIONS



down to size, continuing the established outline. However, matching scraps together so perfectly that trimming is unnecessary, or kept to a minimum, is the Crazy Puzzler's challenge.

The true Crazy Puzzler sees connections between shapes of scraps and fragments and, at the same time, relationships between adjacent colors and patterns. Selected pattern pieces cut from Crazy Puzzle fabric, included within a pieced patchwork format, can have an energizing effect upon the design.

Because of all the seam allowances, Crazy Puzzle pattern pieces are difficult to hand appliqué, but possible for machine appliqué.

As an extra help in creating her "Basket of Patches" project (shown on p. 48) Colette offers our readers full-size patterns with additional instructions for the setting of the blocks. Send \$4.50 ppd to Platypus, Box 396, Planetarium Station, New York, NY 10024.

SHAG

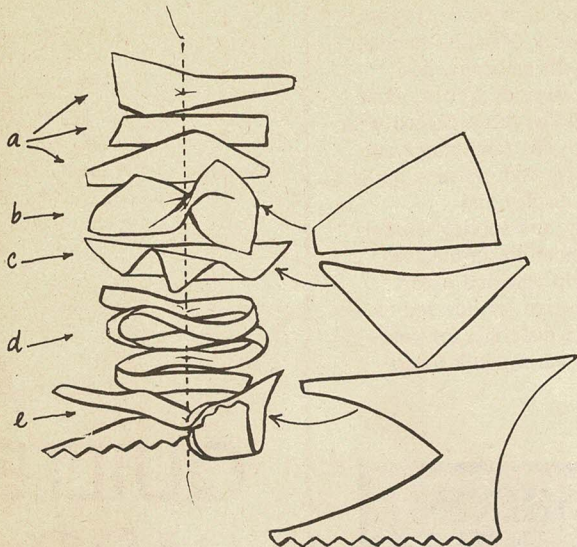
Compared to Shag, the scraps used for Crazy Puzzle are large. Shag uses snippets that always end in the wastebasket unless you're a gleefully frugal quilter — bits as small as 1" x 1/4", weirdly shaped cutaways, 'strings' as wide as a seam allowance or less, trimmed-off selvages, anything that's strong enough to sustain a tug without pulling apart. This motley source material, when machine-stitched to a base fabric, creates a dense, bushy-textured pile that adds another dimension to the fabric surface.

The process is simple. With the machine set to make very small stitches, fabric scraps, centered in front of the needle, are sewn to a backing fabric in parallel rows. When necessary, scraps are twisted, folded, pleated, scrunched, or looped back and forth before being stitched. A T-pin and tweezers are helpful extensions to fingers, which can suddenly seem very clumsy. Rows can be straight, curved or spiral, but should always be spaced close enough to each other to force the loops and ends at the sides of the seams upwards. Before beginning a new row, push and finger-press loops and ends from the previously stitched row firmly out of the way.

If your stitching, because it must be tiny and tight, tends to shrink and distort the base fabric, stretch it in an embroidery hoop while sewing (lay fabric right side up over larger hoop, push smaller hoop down inside larger hoop; wrong side of fabric will be taut and level with rim of hoop and can be held flat against bed of machine). If you suspect that a scrap has not been caught securely in a seam, backstitch before proceeding to the

next scrap. Don't shag over seam allowances. Backing fabric underneath a shagged surface shouldn't show. After shagging is complete, trim projecting ends, if desired. When washed, shagged scraps ravel and become softer, with a finer texture.

To add unexpected contrast and emphasis to a pieced quilt, shag carefully chosen patches within the design. Shag an appliqué before sewing into position, or mark an outline on the background fabric and shag within the outline.



Machine-sewing scraps for Shag:

- (a) narrow scraps, (b) twisted scrap, (c) folded scrap,
- (d) scrap of 'string' looped back and forth,
- (e) folded and twisted scrap.

THREAD FRINGE

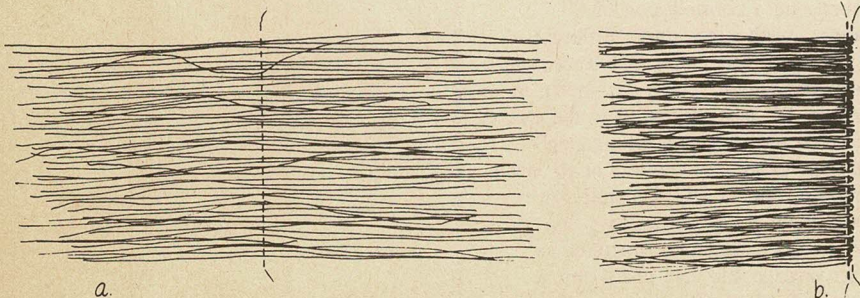
Saving threads cut from the ends of machined seams is a downright miserly activity, but the result justifies the source. While you're sewing Crazy Puzzle and Shag, lay those trimmed-off threads on a piece of paper towel instead of dropping them into the wastebasket. The paper towel surface grabs the thread and, covered with smooth paper, will keep it untangled and accessible when you're ready to use it for fringe.

On your fabric base, indicate the line you want to fringe, using pencil or disappearing pen. Center about 12 threads over the pencilled line, arranging the threads parallel to each other. With your machine set for very small stitches, sew over the threads following the line. Arrange 12 or more threads in front of the needle, stitch them down, and continue until the line is covered. Brush the threads on the right side of the seam over the threads on the left side of the seam; topstitch

$\frac{1}{16}$ " or closer to the folded top, or head, of the fringe. If desired, trim the base of the fringe evenly. Tweezers, T-pin and an old toothbrush are helpful fringing tools.

Within a design, Thread Fringe, like Shag, is most effective when used selectively and with purpose. Besides adding a dimensional component to a quilt top, Thread Fringe contributes a delicate, directional element as well. Because it radiates outward, it frames and accentuates any area it surrounds. Patches covered entirely with rows of Thread Fringe seem to move.

Whether you sort snippets by color and texture or go for the wildest potluck, the extremes of economy can give quilts and wearables a paradoxically extravagant look. Nobody would guess the humble origins of these exciting effects — except clever puzzlers, shaggers and fringers with their own stashing habits!



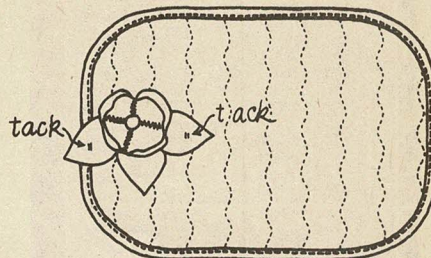
Making Thread Fringe: (a) sewing threads to fabric, (b) threads folded over at seam and topstitched.

TABLECLOTH AND PLACEMAT SET

Continued from page 57

Finishing:

Make an $\frac{1}{8}$ " double hem around outer edge.



Placemat Diagram

2 PLACEMATS:

Make templates for trimming corner curves and for quilting lines. Trace appliqués onto Wonder-Under™: 2 each for pink petals, blue centers; 4 for blue petals; 12 for green leaves.

Cutting:

Cut green/white print: 4 rectangles 13" x 18½"; two bias strips 2" wide for a total length of 52" each.

Cut appliqués following instructions for Wonder-Under™.

Cut batting: 2 rectangles 13" x 18½".

Assembly:

Use template to mark curve and trim corners of green rectangles and batting. Layer placemat backing (right side down), batting, and placemat top (right side up); pin; baste together $\frac{1}{4}$ " from outer edges. Use template to mark quilting lines 2" apart; stitch. Follow Bias Binding, page 26, to bind edges, starting at center of left edge.

APPLIQUES:

Refer to Machine Appliqué, page 26, and Placemat Diagram, and use matching thread.

Fuse leaves together in pairs, right sides out; satin stitch outer edges. Fuse blue petals, wrong side together with leaves sandwiched between; satin stitch outer edge. Fuse pink petals; embroider outer edge and stitching lines. To complete, fuse and embroider flower center. Tack in place at left edge of placemat top.

2 NAPKINS:

Cutting:

Cut pink/white print: two 13" squares.

Assembly:

Fold in half lengthwise, then crosswise to locate center; press lightly with fingers to mark. Measure and mark 6¼" out from center for a 12½" circle. Trim. Make a double narrow hem. Fold in half 3 times and tuck underneath appliqué on placemat.