FEBRUARY

February Quilt Block

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Roses are red, lilies are white, here's another quilt block that's sure to delight! Welcome back to HGTV's *Strolling the Block* quilt block of the month. This month's block shows gray February skies and snow giving away to bare ground, but hearts are warmed with the delivery of valentines in the mailbox. Here's how to put this one together with easy-to-follow, step-by-step instructions.

Materials (12" x 12" finished block):

fabric selection - Use any desired fabrics. We selected 100-percent cottons in these prints:
- gray cloud print for sky background
- printed white on white for snow middle background
- printed light brown for foreground
- red with beige "thatched" print for house
- small pink and beige checkered pattern for door and chimney
- brown marble for fence and mailbox post
- dark red vine with orange dots printed fabric for dormer
- beige with red flower pattern for windows
- printed black and gray pattern for mailbox
- red with beige dots for steps
- red printed pattern for heart on door
translucent template plastic
Steam-A-Seam 2 double-sided fusible web
embroidery floss - black, red pearle cotton, gray
rotary cutter and mat
craft scissors

Steps:

Creating templates
You can make templates from various materials, including pieces of heavy card stock, cardboard, freezer paper or template plastics. Again, some of the patterns in this block will be reused in future blocks; so it's recommended that you use a translucent template plastic due to the durability factor. Keep in mind the finished fabric shape will be the mirror image of the template pattern.

1. Print out the patterns (**figures A and B**). The house, windows, dormer and door are the same templates used in the January block so there's no need to recut if you've kept those. The new templates are in **figure B**.
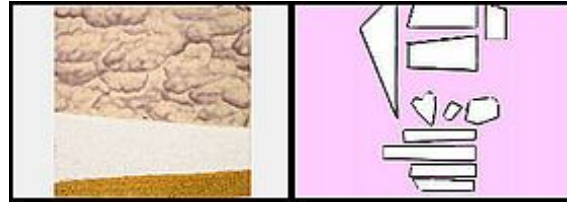

Figure C

2. Place a piece of template plastic over the printed patterns and trace the outline of each using a permanent marking pen (ultra fine Sharpie works great).

3. Cut out and label each template piece. Many templates will be reused in other blocks so plan to store them flat for future use. Note that though the fence has six components, it is made from just two template pieces. Also, the mailbox post and the top step are made from the same template.

Background (**figure C**)
1. Cut one piece of "cloud" background fabric measuring 13" x 9", one piece of "snow" fabric measuring 13" x 5", and one piece of "bare ground" fabric measuring 13" x 2".

2. On the wrong side of the fabric, use a ruler and pen to measure and mark one side of the snow fabric at five inches and the other side at 2-3/4 inches. Angle the ruler to draw a diagonal sewing line from these two points. With right sides together and using a 1/4-inch seam allowance, stitch together the cloud and snow fabrics along the diagonal line (**figure D**). Press and trim away the excess fabric (**figure E**).
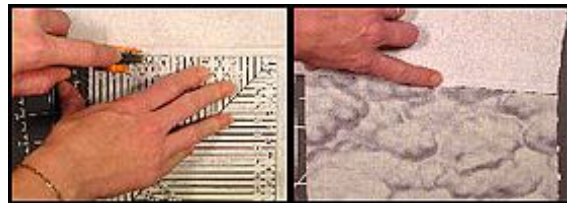

Figure E   Figure D

3. Follow the same process to add the bare ground fabric. Mark one side of the bare ground fabric at two inches and the other side at 1-1/2 inches. Draw the sewing line. With right sides together and using the 1/4-inch seam allowance, stitch the bare ground fabric to the snow fabric along the sew line. Again, press and trim away the excess fabric.

4. Trim the finished background piece to a 12-1/2-inch square block.

Applique
A quick word about fusible web--follow the manufacturer instructions for whichever type you decide to use. For this project, we use a double-sided type because it allows us to reposition the pieces if desired. Double-sided fusibles come sandwiched between two pieces of paper. Here's how to use them with this pattern:

1. Cut the fusible into smaller, manageable pieces that will accommodate each template size, keeping the

protective paper of the fusible intact.

2. Using a pencil, trace around each template onto one of the paper-covered sides of the fusible.

3. Peel away the opposite paper side of the fusible (the one without the tracing) and adhere it to the wrong side of the desired fabric.

4. Cutting along the traced lines, cut out both the fusible web and fabric for each pattern piece.

5. Next, position the pieces onto the background square. There's a lot of room to customize the block with this step. Plus, you don't have to fuse anything until you're sure you like the design. Here's how we did it:

- Position the house (A) fabric on the background square. We placed the bottom corner of ours approximately 2-1/4 inches up from the bottom of the block and 1-3 /4 inches in from the edge. Tuck the chimney fabric (small side down) so it stands out behind the house (**figure F**).
- Our objective was to place everything slightly off kilter in order to give the block a bit of a folk art feel. To accomplish this, position the windows (C and D) and dormer (E) at a slight tilt (refer to the first picture for placement).

Figure F

Figure G

For door and step placement, begin with the bottom step (I) by placing it an inch from the bottom right corner of the house and overlapping it by 1/4 inch. Place the top step (H) 1/4-inch above the bottom step, having 1/2-inch on either side. Position the door (B) on the top step with approximately one inch on either side. Keeping with the folk art theme, place the steps so they're slightly off center. Place the heart (G) on the door, but here's a bit of a surprise. Add dimension by stuffing a dime-size wad of batting between the door and the fusible webbing of the heart (**figure G**).

- Mailbox -- Place the Mailbox template H as a post. Layer Mailbox template E on top of the post (**figure H**) then add on Mailbox template F as the open door. Cut a second Mailbox template F from slightly darker colored fabric and layer it on the top edge of mailbox fabric piece A as the "inside" of the box.

Figure H

Figure I

- Fence--To create the fence and rails, cut two Post and Rail J fabric pieces and three Post and Rail K fabric pieces. Set one P&R; (J) approximately 1/2 inch from the bottom and 3-1/4 inches from the left side of the block (layered on the house) and use the other as the top rail of the fence. Set one P&R; (K) post two inches from the bottom and 1/2-inch from the left side of the block. Use the second P&R; (K) as the bottom rail of the fence. Tuck the "rails" behind the "posts" (**figure I**). Cut the third P&R; (K) in half to create the two short rails on the far left of the block. Tuck each half behind the post and trim to the edge of the block (**figure J**).
- Once you're pleased with the design, follow the manufacturer directions to press the pieces into place. Avoid

fusing any pieces in the 1/4-inch perimeter of the block to allow for the addition of sashing.

Figure J

Finishing
1. Cover the raw edges of the applique pieces with blanket -stitching. To do this, use two-strands of black embroidery floss outlining the house, fence and mailbox.

2. Add a red button as a door handle to the house.

3. Use simple broken line curves of stitches to create the billows of smoke from the chimney (**figure L**).

Figure L

Figure M

4. Using two-strands of red embroidery floss, create the hearts cascading from the mailbox using a satin stitch. Connect them together with a chain stitch. Outline the hearts with black floss (**figure M**).

FEBRUARY

Heart - G

Mailbox - F

Mailbox-E

Mailboxand Top Step - H

Bottom Step - I

Post and Rail - J

Post and Rail - K