

Doing Continuous Curve Sections with your IQ!

A LongarmChat.com Discussion



This was a discussion some of us were having on www.longarmchat.com about using the line pattern feature while doing continuous curves.

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Check out Michelle Wyman's
digitized designs at
www.intelligentquilting.com.

I have had quite a few inquiries about how I did the CC on the One Block Wonder recently. So I thought I'd start a new post about how I did it. To view quilt pictures of this quilt you can go to

<http://longarmchat.com/index.cfm/event/Forum.ViewTopic?TopicID=26052&page=1#181966>

First I have to acknowledge Linda for teaching me how to do this correctly. She is a patient and thorough teacher and I am lucky she was around to help me.

I had done plenty of CC before IQ. I always did a pathway that is pretty typical for LAers: kind of zig zag over down up over down up over etc all the way across the area, then do the bottom or top edge back to the starting point. Most of you know what I mean. I have done this with a template as a guide (such as Constantine Quilts CC guides) and freehand when I got better at it. I tried to have about 1/4" in the middle of the arc.

So, based on that pathway that used to work so well, I set up some PPP muslin and with the blue marker, drew out the triangle pattern of a OBW on it. Then using line pattern, I put my needle over each point and hit ok to tell IQ where my points were. I wanted an arc on each side of each triangle (similar to doing CC on each side of a square like a 9patch). I set IQ to do the arc height at .25 which is like 1/4". I followed that same pathing: over, down, up, over etc. I decided that doing 2 rows of triangles continuously would be the most I'd try at a time, just to be safe. It was so cool to see the arcs appear on the screen and they looked so perfect!! 8)

Then I stitched it out. I was shocked. :shock: The arcs looked anemic, and they didn't hit on the points very well at all. I was sure I had the needle right on those points, just like Linda's shows in her video. So I started over, and did another test, being extra careful about my points. Stitch out gave me the same results! YUCK! :? Then I tried to put a second set of rows under an existing set I had stitched to see if they looked okay when subsequent rows were added in. More YUCK!! :? :x I decided that either doing CC with IQ was not all it was cracked up to be -- OR I was having major user error. Guess which it was??!! :wink:

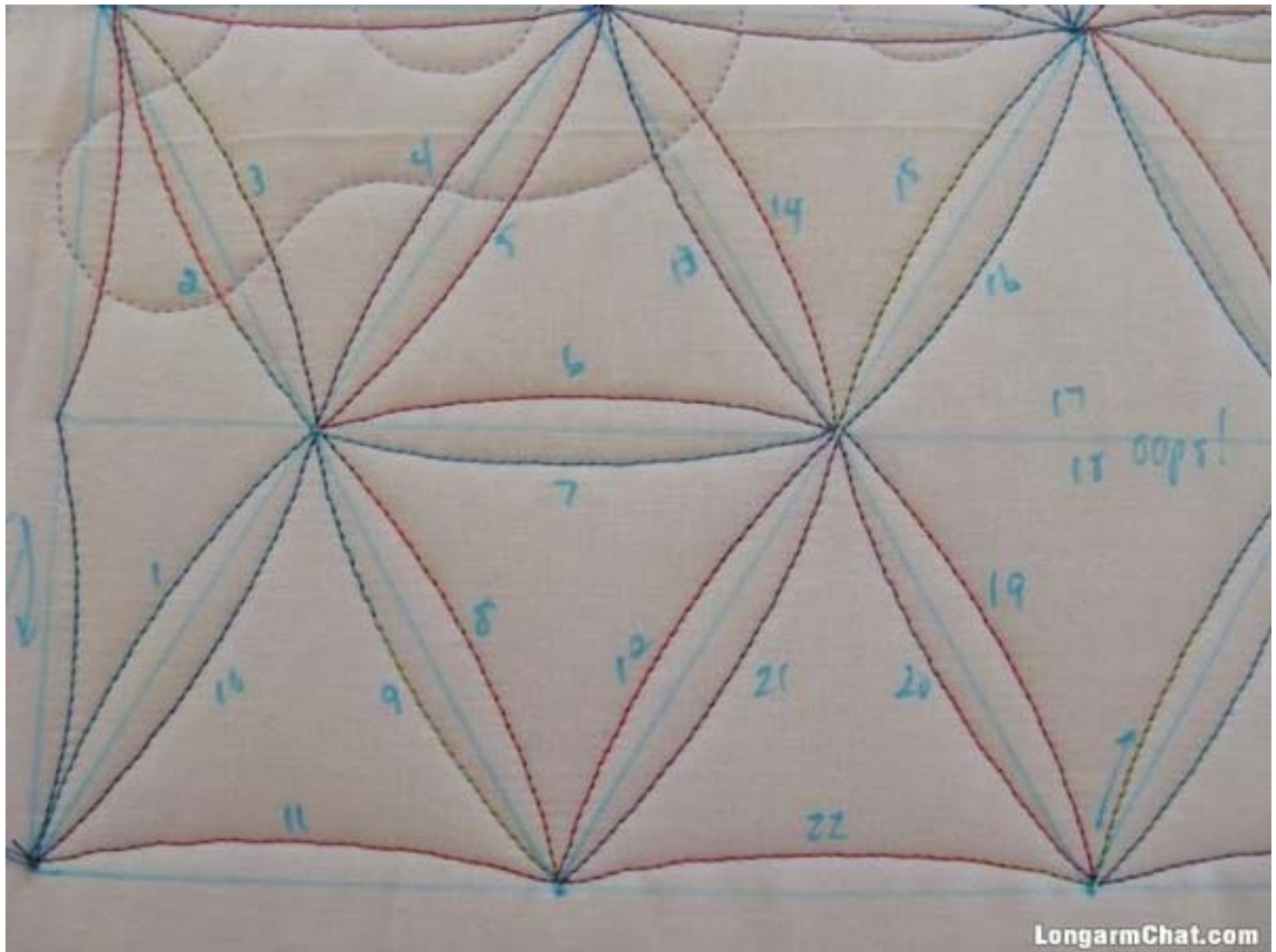
Here is a picture (figure 1) of the stitchout using the "old" pathway that I used for freehand CC. I numbered the arcs in order so you can see the pathway. (the oops at 17/18 is where I forgot the pathway and skipped a section.

I emailed Linda this picture and called her in desperation. She explained to me the intricacies of CCing with IQ -- which turned out not to be that hard at all!

Here's what I learned:

First, I needed to turn on "Snap to Needle". It's on the screen near the zoom stuff. That gets the points perfectly aligned. You click when the first point is right where you want it, then as you get close with your needle placement to that point from any other angle (as you are putting in connecting CC's), it will place a circle on the screen right at the point, and you can click then and all the new points joining that point will be exactly on top of each other. New rule: Can't do CC without Snap to Needle engaged!!

Figure 1

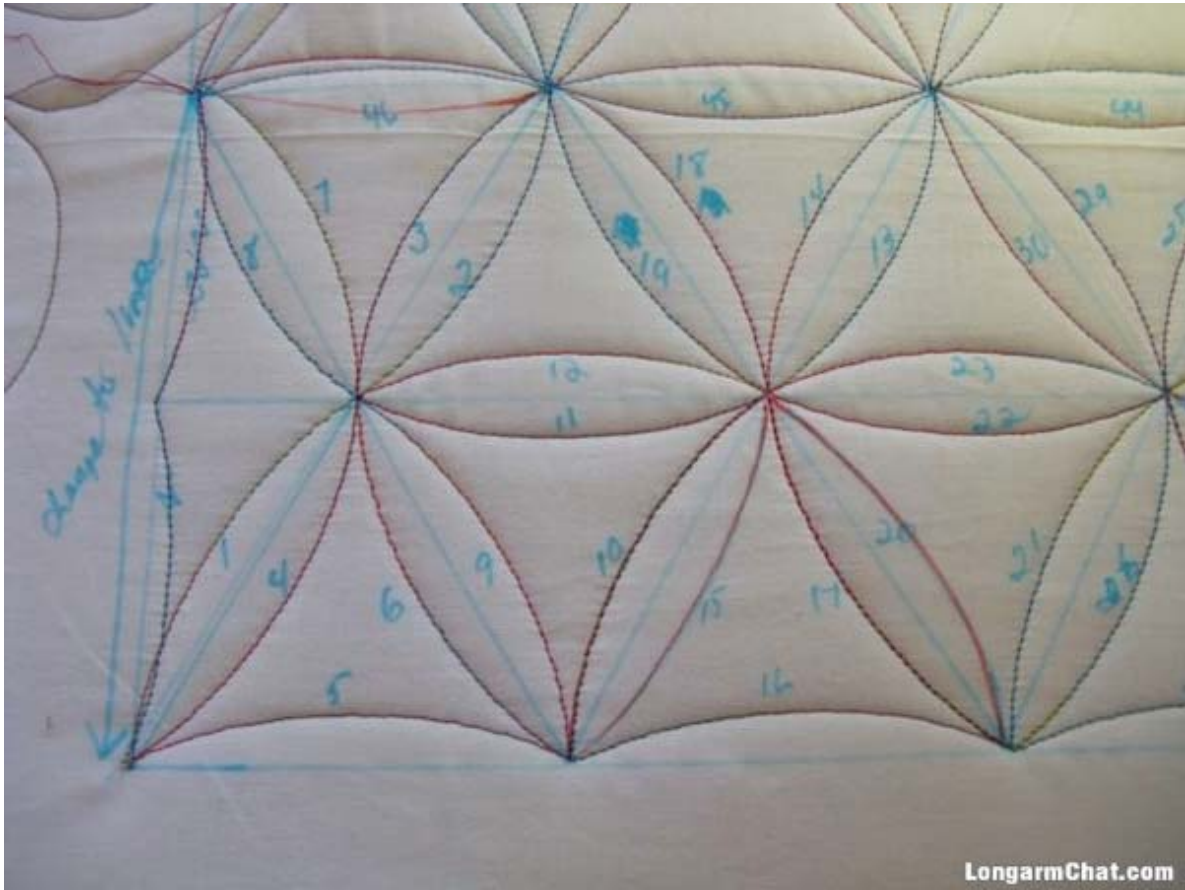


Next, Linda suggested that I increase the size of the arcs to make them look fuller and prettier. I chose .40 instead of the .25 I had used. Almost a half inch at the fullest part of the arc. That looked so much nicer and filled the triangles better (they were 3 1/2" on each side). I learned that it's okay to do CC that is not 1/4".

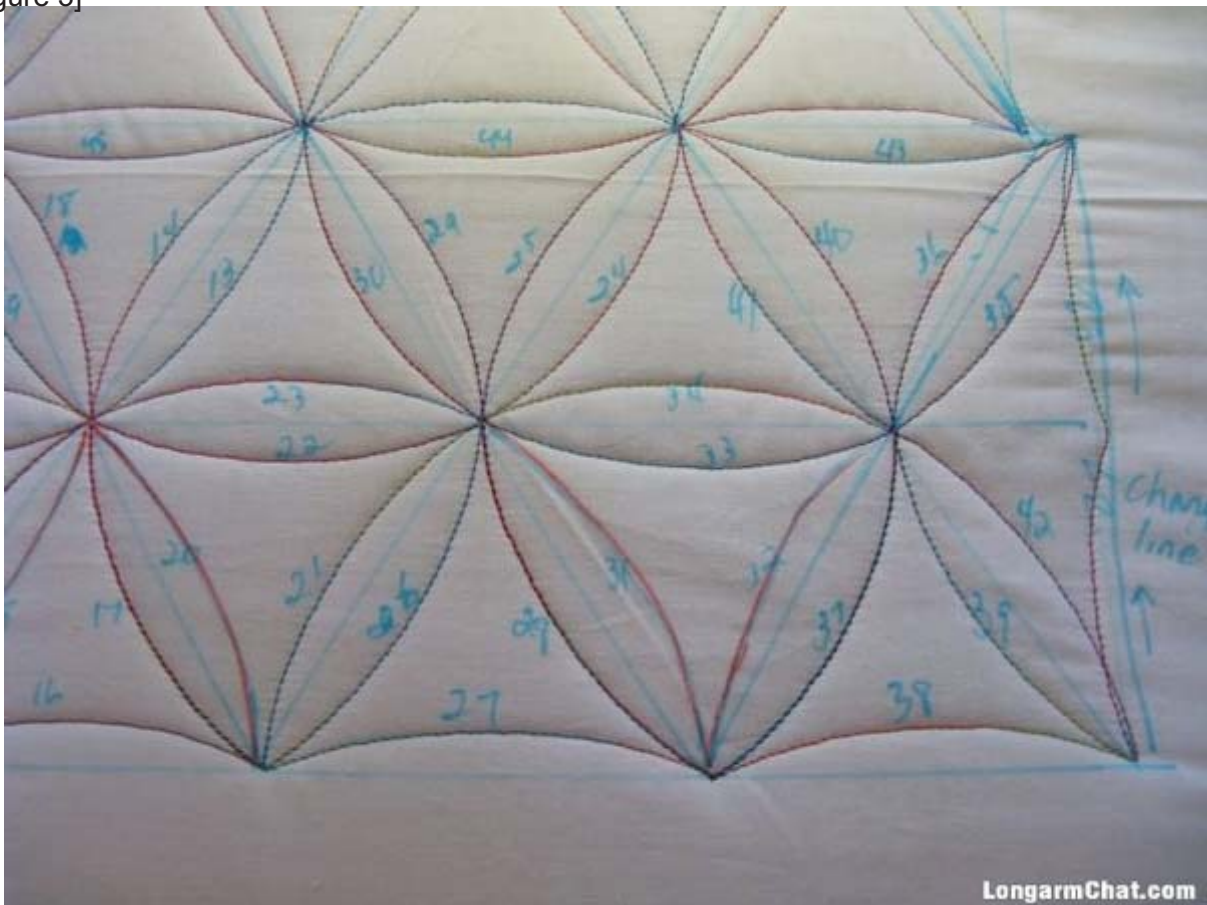
Then, I learned a bit about the digital pathway for stitching vs the freehand pathway. What works perfectly for freehand does not always work for robotic. My pathway of over down up over etc created too many jerking back and forth motions and contributed to a lot of fabric distortion. When I say a lot I mean a few threads were pushed one way, then as the CC was stitched back and forth, those few threads of the fabric were not then in the right place anymore to meet up and make all those intersections look good. Even tho it was only a few threads off in the intersecting points, it was enough to look badly quilted. :(

Linda suggested a different pathway (which Zoltan himself shows in a picture on the IQ Yahoo group! If I had only remembered that!!). I needed to click my points in a different order, one that took advantage of longer runs of softly swerving CC's. Also, in order to get IQ to do the undulating, sometimes I had to click "flip" before I clicked okay, to make the arc go the other way from the default way IQ put it in. It's really hard to explain, but look at the pictures below and follow the numbers. See how the CC's flow better, where ever they can they run like a ribbon. The IQ stitches really smoothly in an undulating manner in as many places as possible, which cuts down on the distortion. I was amazed at how much better the intersections looked!! :D [Figure 2]

[Figure 2]



[Figure 3]



Ignore the CC's [figure 3] on the left and right edges, I was trying to see if I should do them at the beginning and end of a line of stitching (which were partial triangles)... but the length of the vertical space was shorter than the length of the diagonals in the triangles and the same size CC didn't fit properly because of that. I ended up doing SID instead. Also, I forgot my pathing again on this, hence some unstitched arcs which just have red pen... those are areas I forgot to flip the arc on, and IQ stitched right over the previous arc on the other side of the line... that over stitching was perfect but not what i wanted! LOL

So, I learned that I needed to think differently about pathing with a robotic system. I did end up only doing 2 rows deep at a time, but did the whole pass across the quilt, then switched to manual to SID up to the top edge, then got back into the CC to go right to left along the top back to the left edge, then SID down to the start point. Then I tied off, and advanced the quilt, realigned, and set up the next pass. I think next time I will try to do 3 rows at once and see how accurate I can get that.

I also learned that I was going too fast. I slowed my IQ and my LA down A LOT!!! I got good stitches at speed of 1.0 and detail at .08. My A1 was set on motor speed of 4. I used my hands to manipulate the fabric a tiny bit if needed. Be very careful not to lean on the front roller tho... that will throw the placement of the stitches off.

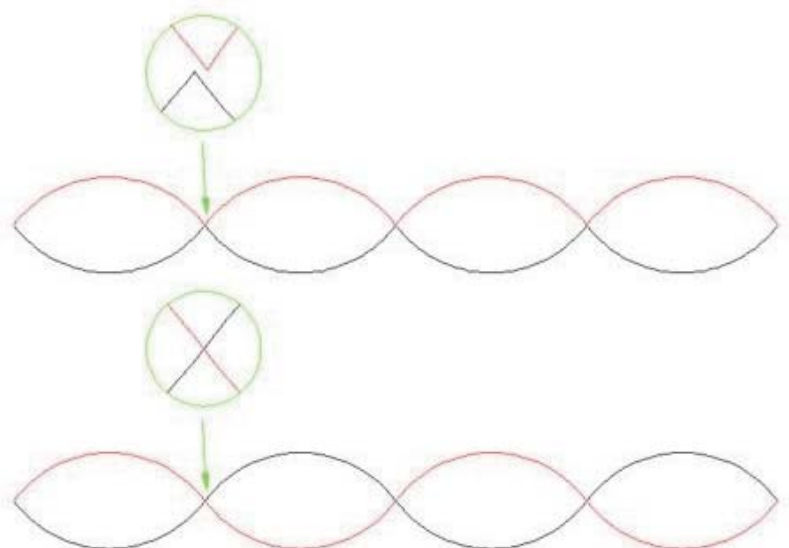
I do admit that occasionally as the row progressed, some of the stitches did not hit perfectly on the intersections. They did however, hit perfectly in relation to themselves, just not on the fabric seam intersection perfectly. Busy fabric is a godsend! But it's not any worse than freehand. I did once in a while have to realign a tiny bit on the far side of the row, just like Penny mentioned in a previous post. That helped. If I had known about the drift issue and solution that Linda just educated us on this week, I would have used that to help it stay on track better. But the amount IQ was off across the 62" row, was minimal.

I was a very happy camper with the end result. :D 8) :P

Another really neat thing was that it really DID NOT TAKE ALL THAT LONG!!! Not counting the learning curve (which did take a few hours), I was able to have IQ stitch the whole interior (2 rows at a time) in only 2 hours 15 min!!! That was about 10 minutes to mark on quilt every point, then about 23 minutes to stitch the row. The beadboard piano keys I did the old-fashioned way (Penny's instructions for that was a day too late!) and the SID around the inner border. That took me another **2 hours. Total time: 4 hours 15 min. :D**

Did I say I was a happy camper?? :D 8) :P :D

I have borrowed Zoltan's picture of the right and wrong way to do line pattern. [Figure 4] He uses pumpkin seeds as his example, but it is exactly the same concept for the undulating line for the CC pathway.



[Figure 4]

I am still doing most of my SID freehand with ruler and base. I will do a small run of it tho with IQ, but for borders no.

I have done diagonal crosshatching in a plain setting square with IQ tho. Using Helen's crosshatch, and it came out nicely.

As far as the CC taking more or less time than freehand, I was very pleased that all that CC on the OBW only took 2 hours. That included the point and click to set it up. Sure, I can CC fast freehand, esp on a 2" square where the distance is short. As the length gets longer, my CC can get wobbly or not hit the corner quite right. And I will still do it freehand for let's say a few 9patches. But I think for a whole top, like the OBW, I was very pleased with the result and the time it took. So I do think you need to look at each quilt individually as whether freehand or IQ is the better choice for CC. Like most things, there is no hard and fast rule.

Another reason I chose IQ for this particular quilt, was that the CC was the only motif in the whole top! There was nothing else for the eye to look at. All CC, all over. It had to be perfect. On a sampler quilt or a TB quilt, it wouldn't be as critical. I am not sure I could have CC'd this OBW in less than 2 hours freehand and have it turn out so well.



Posted and quilted by Michelle W.

I want to thank Michelle for explaining this so thoroughly and writing it out for all of us. If you would like to see more discussions like this one, or ask questions of your own, please visit us at www.longarmchat.com This information is being discussed in the Computer Quilter Forum area.

Linda Lawson
Owner/Administrator

