

A QUICK LABEL

By Margo J. Clabo

For a really fast quilt label, just print it out on your computer! In a nutshell, all you have to do is fuse freezer paper your fabric and run it thorough your printer, but I'm going to tell you why some things will work better than others in this process. It will probably take you longer to read these instructions than it will take to make a label, but I want to let you know how to get the best results for a very simple printed label.

First, let me say that not all printers or printer inks are created equal! I strongly advise you to pre-test the wash ability of yours before sending a printed label out into the world on its own! I have been printing labels on Ink-Jet (NOT LASER) printers since 1992 and know that mine are permanent. They go through the washing machine periodically and I can still read them. That being said, only the black ink is likely to be permanent. Colored inks will wash right out! Count on it! If you want colors in your label you can add them with fabric markers or fabric paint, or use specially treated fabric. The industry is changing all the time, and one day there may be printer inks designed especially for fabric! In the meantime, you might want to pre-treat your fabric with

Bubble Jet Set for added insurance. It will make colored inks washable.

<http://www.cjenkinscompany.com/ProductDetails.asp?ProductCode=bubblejetset2000&Click=3174&gclid=CKHakPGfm6ICFQqwsgodC1mjuw>

Or you can choose to use Miracle Fabric Sheets or one of the many photo transfer fabrics on the market today:

<http://store.quilting-warehouse.com/phototransfer-fabric.html>

For this sample I am just using a piece of light colored cotton fabric that blends with the fabric on the back of my quilt, with no special treatment other than pre-washing. You should choose fabric that is light colored so the ink will show up well, but avoid the white-on-white fabrics that have the plastic coating on the top layer. That layer won't absorb the ink.

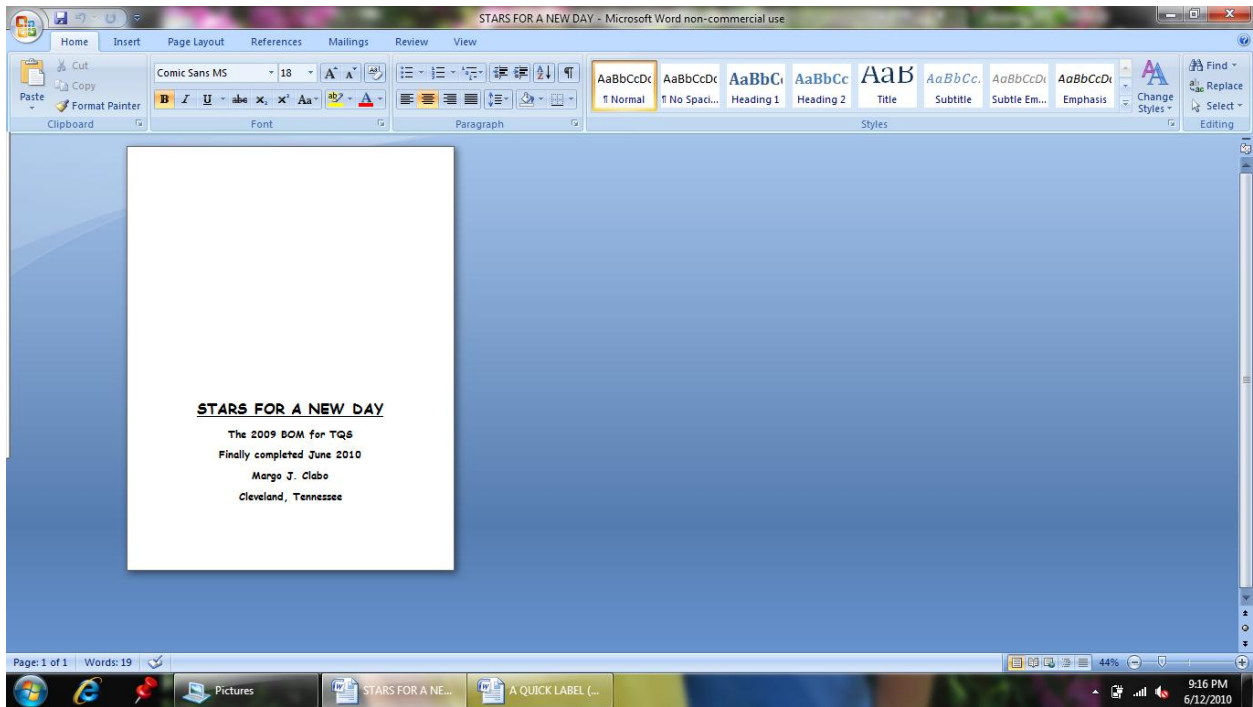
To prepare your fabric for the label, be sure that it is prewashed so that you remove any chemicals that would interfere with the ink's penetration into the fibers then use the Bubble Jet Set if you want to and let the fabric dry thoroughly. Pre-washing also allows the fabric to adhere better to the freezer paper foundation.

Cut both your washed and dried fabric and a piece of freezer paper about 9" x 11-1/2". Securely fuse the shiny side of the paper to the back of your fabric with a hot dry iron. Iron it well on both the front and the back to be sure you get all the fabric well adhered. Place the hot fused unit under a large

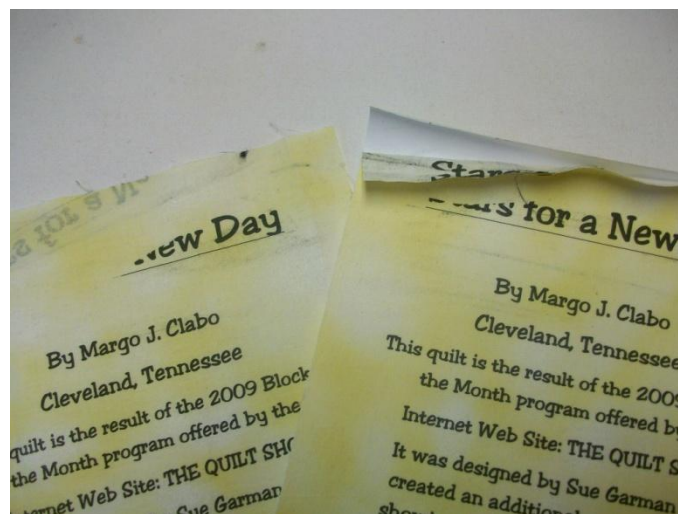
rotary ruler or a book until it cools completely. This will help the fused unit stay flat and prevent the edges from curling up when it goes through the printer.



While that is cooling prepare your text on the computer. You can compose the text of your label in any word processing software, choosing a **FONT** that compliments the *style* of your quilt and is easy to **READ**. Be sure to include the name of the quilt, your name and city and a date. Other information to include might be the recipient's name, the occasion, awards the quilt has won or any other facts you want to document. You can adjust the size and placement of the text until you are pleased with it. Select all of your text and make it "**BOLD**" so that more ink will be applied to the fabric, then position the text on the bottom half of the page. Run a paper test print to make sure it is positioned correctly.



I always position the text on the bottom half of the page, because if there is a snafoo in the printing, it will happen when the fabric first enters the printer. Here are a couple of examples of what I mean. I tried to make a label as big as a whole sheet of paper, but it just wouldn't go through the printer without hanging up.



It just seems to work better if the fabric/paper unit can get a running start and the leading edge is well past the printer's rollers before it starts the actual printing.

When the fabric/paper unit is cool and flat, trim the fused unit to 8-1/2" x 11" with rotary tools, being sure that there are no loose threads along any of the edges or on the surface of the fabric. You really don't want them jamming up your printer rollers!

Do you know for sure which side of the paper your printer prints on? If not, write the word "FABRIC" on one side of a blank sheet of paper. Place it in the paper tray of the printer with "FABRIC" facing UP. Now run a test sample of your label. Did it print on the "FABRIC" side? If so, that is how to load your prepared fabric. If it printed on the back of the "FABRIC" test sheet, you will need to load it with the actual fabric facing down.

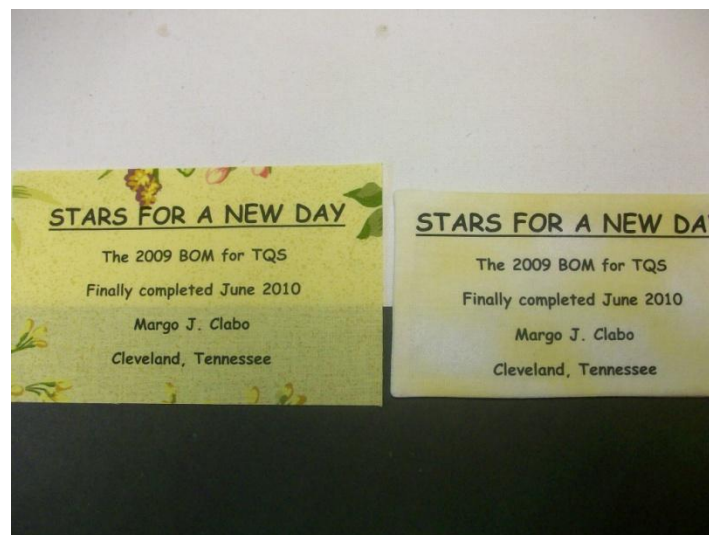
Run your fabric unit through the printer, printing your text, then immediately heatset the ink with a hot dry iron and peel the freezer paper off the back while it's still warm to minimize distortion as the fabric is pulled away.

Fold the fabric in half, right sides together and press well to mark the center of the fabric then open it up again and make a slit in the middle of the top half in order to turn the label

right side out. This top half will be the label's lining. Lining the label will prevent darker fabrics from shadowing through.



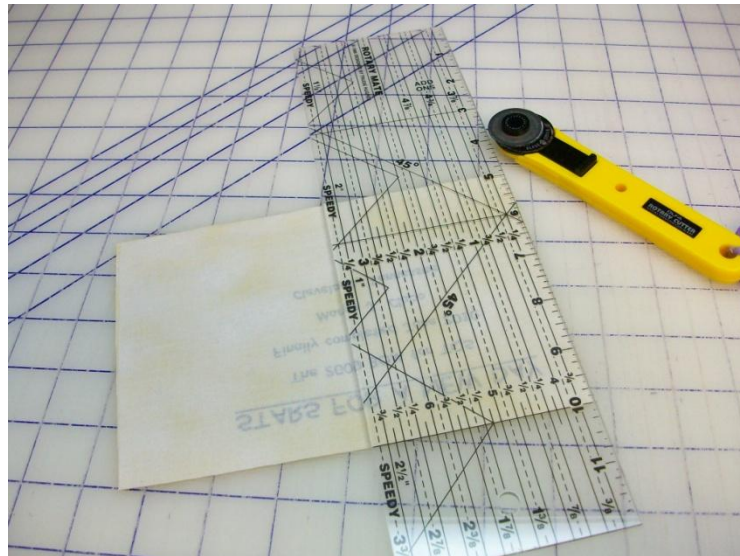
Here is an example of why I use lined labels. The fabric on the left is what I used on the back of the quilt with no lining. The fabric on the right is the same weight, but a lighter color, but because it has been lined, you can't see the darker fabric shadowing through.



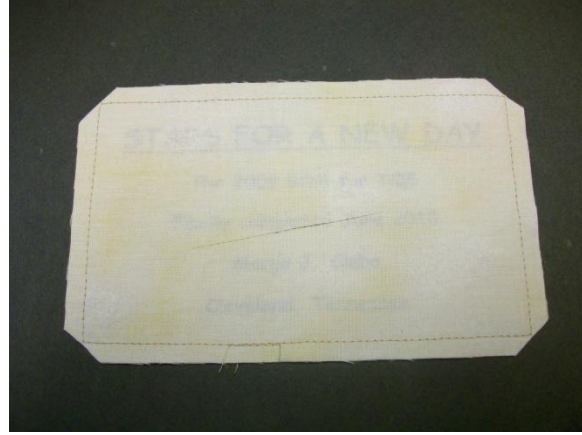
Fold your label in half, right sides together again and press. This is usually enough to gently secure the two pieces of cotton fabric for trimming.

(If you want to make a label that is larger than half of the sheet, position it as close to the bottom edge as you can, and just cut another piece of fabric for the lining.)

Use rotary tools to trim the label and lining to the desired size, being sure to leave $\frac{1}{4}$ " for your seam allowances.



Stitch a line completely around the entire perimeter, $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the raw edge then heat set the seam with a hot dry iron and carefully clip the corners away, being sure not to cut the stitched lines.



Use the slit in the back to turn the label right side out and gently shape the corners with a blunt tool. Alex's 4-in-1 works well, or an oversized cuticle stick or a knitting needle. Just be sure to be very gentle and don't poke through those fragile corners!

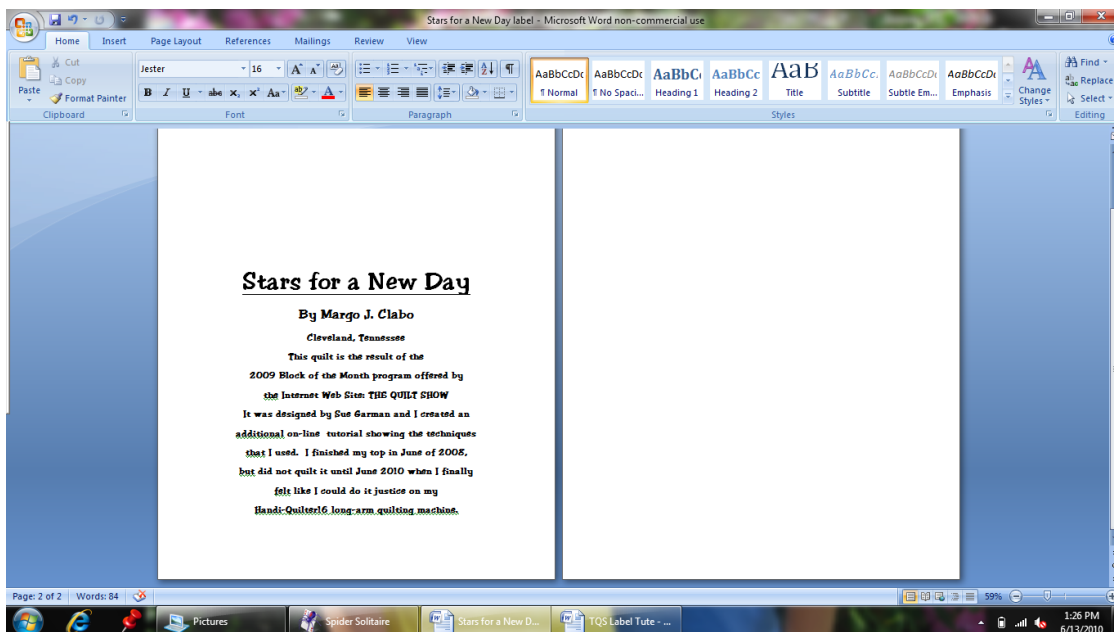


Press all of the stitched lines and hand stitch the label onto your quilt. If you just catch the lining fabric with your blind hem stitches, or use a ladder stitch, the stitches won't show at all!

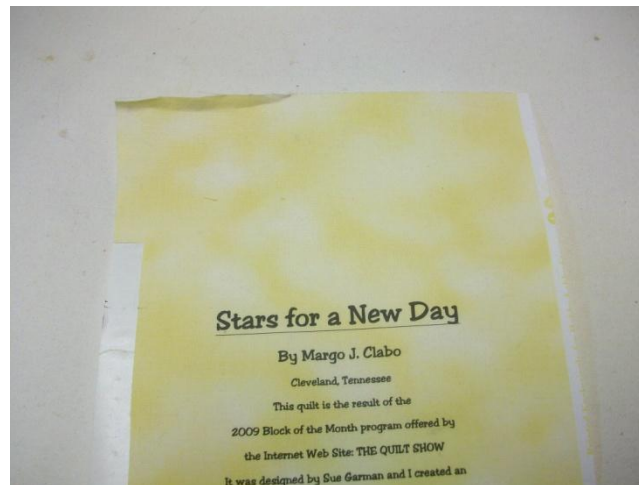
This label was "fussy cut" so that it matches the fabric on the back of the quilt but the text was located on a fairly open area of the fabric's design.



I decided that I wanted a larger label with more information than this little one. You saw the results of my attempt at a full sized label so I just reduced the size of the fonts and moved the text as far down the page as I could get it.



You can see that I was down to my last scrap of fabric, and it didn't even cover the entire freezer paper foundation, but the leading edge (the top) was complete, and securely adhered.



Even though the top edge was still a little distorted, because there was no printing there, it didn't jam up in the printer, and the text that I needed printed out just fine.

I added some simple borders using left over binding fabric and am pleased with how the finished product looks. You can see that because I used a light fabric to line the label, you cannot see the print of the quilt's backing shadowing through.

