

MAKE IT SPECIAL

Fabrications began as a retirement plan for Janet Dapson and her husband Dick. Janet now describes it as their retirement cruise. And cruise they have - from a business run out of their grown daughter's bedroom to a beautiful new location in the Clocktower Green Complex, north of Richland.

As a sewer, Janet had a difficult time finding the kind of fabric she wanted to use in garment construction. With a focus on natural fibers, quality fabrics - finer wools, real linen, and quality cottons for clothing construction not duplicated elsewhere in Kalamazoo, shoppers will find the same fabrics used in better ready-to-wear such as Liz Claiborne, Donna Karan, and L. L. Bean. Janet says, "We try to bring into the store the hard-to-find fabrics that will appeal to our customers." Recent additions are bolts of wool jersey knits, polyester/rayon blends, rayon and Lycra jersey knits, and bamboo.



Before *Fabrications* became a retail shop in its first location on Gull Road, Janet began teaching sewing at the Bernina Store in Kalamazoo. Teaching people how to use the products sold at *Fabrications* is at the core of its business philosophy. As a garment maker, she knows first-hand that women become frustrated when their beautifully constructed clothing doesn't fit properly. She searched long and hard before experiencing a fitting "a-ha moment" with the Palmer-Pletsch (www.palmerpletsch.com) method, which takes a partially drafted pattern and uses it as a template for fitting adjustments. Janet says, "I wanted to share that with other garment makers."

The class schedule (available online at www.fabricationsonline.com) is expansive and includes pants fitting, big fit (Janet's term for bodice fitting a blouse, dress or tailored jacket) and tailoring. Specialty classes include Sewing with Knits, Silk Made Simple, and Basic Serger Instruction. Many specialty classes are based on customers' requests and desire to know how to work with some of the beautiful fabrics for sale at *Fabrications*. Rosebud, nationally known for teaching industrial shortcuts and offering a different perspective to garment construction, often appears on the schedule. There are classes for beginners, too. Janet embraces ASG's

philosophy of Teaching Another Generation (TAG) and is offering beginning sewing for kids this summer.

The move to Clocktower Green brought visibility and an exponentially growing business. While focusing on independent pattern companies, Janet recently added Kwik Sew patterns in response to customer requests for an expanded selection. A spinner rack now occupies floor space and special orders arrive within 2 days. *Fabrications* offers notions to support the work of garment makers - Palmer-Pletsch interfacings and a line of fusible tapes, including stay tapes, bias tapes, and LJ Designs' double-sided fusible webbing, which Janet says are very fine and stay soft in a finished garment. Quality tailoring and pressing tools, crafted by woodworkers who have filled the gap left by national companies that no longer produce them, are also available.

A new location brought an opportunity to diversify. And Janet, an avid knitter and crocheter, didn't think twice about making room for natural fiber yarns in the new store. In keeping with their philosophy, she and Dick knew that there would be the need to teach people to knit; he learned to knit so he could talk to customers intelligently about yarns and knitting techniques. He and Cathy McCarthy now form the core of *Fabrications*' knitting instruction. They can be joined on Wednesday nights for "Sit and Knit" between 6:00-8:30 p.m. You're invited to bring your current project. Just a beginner? Not a problem - Dick's still working on potholders!

What's in *Fabrications*' future? More smooth sailing. In October, watch for a wearable fiber arts exhibit co-hosted with the neighboring Blue Water Gallery (www.bluewatergallery.com). Focus will be on *Fabrications*' customers who create various types of garment designs and offer them for purchase - clothing, hats, purses - sewn, woven, knitted. Look for more information in an upcoming issue of "**And Sew On...**"

Dick and Janet are joined in their business by their daughter, Christine Crookham. She's involved in much of the behind-the-scenes work, and many of her creations are on display throughout the shop.

Janet is an ASG member, having served as the Kalamazoo Chapter president for 3 years. She offers members a 10% discount on all purchases and invites them to visit *Fabrications* at its new location:

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