

# Living Her Dream...

she's most creative when she's around her sewing friends. They provide her with a source of inspiration as she decides what new designs will be available at the store.



None of this is a surprise, as Karen wants customers to be inspired when they're in her store and happy when they leave.

If you ask Karen if she has any professional regrets, she would voice two. She feels a personal loss that there is so little sewing instruction available to young people in public schools. She will also tell you that she wishes she had just a little more space at the shop, space to use to teach basic sewing and quilt-making and maybe an appliqué class or two.

Karen Keene has always been just a little entrepreneurial. She provided day care in her home. She did alterations, using the skills she learning in school beginning in the eighth grade. When she started working at the fabric store in Three Rivers sixteen years ago, little did she know that opportunity and her entrepreneurial spirit were going to meet head-on.

Karen thought it was truly wonderful to be able to work around fabrics during the day and go home at night to stitch one of the pieces she'd purchased against her paycheck into a beautiful garment. She'd been working about four years when the shop owner suddenly died. Karen took a deep breath, a big plunge, and became the owner of what is now Karen's Fabric Shop.

At first, the shop was devoted to garment sewers and their fabric and notion needs. About 10 years ago, however, Karen began making the transition to serve quilt makers. This move started as Karen found that patterns required more and more fitting changes before she ever started stitching...a situation all too many of us are forced to face. Not wanting to leave sewing behind, she discovered quilting, joined a quilt guild, and was hooked.

Karen still carries many notions for garment-makers and is always willing to advise them on their projects. She recognizes that Three Rivers is a small community and sewing resources are limited.

A one-person operation, Karen does it all for the shop. She acknowledges that she's fortunate to see new fabrics at shows before they hit store shelves. She says

Karen's Fabric Shop is truly a resource for sewers of all genres in Three Rivers. Karen offers access to long-arm quilting services. Sewers can bring their electronic and/or mechanical sewing machines to the shop for expert repair service. And, of course, she's always happy to place a special order for that hard-to-find item. Project Linus (<http://www.projectlinus.org/>) is Karen's favorite non-profit, and she provides a drop-off point for blankets.

How many of us envy that Karen Keene goes to work every day to do something she loves? She calls owning the shop a great way to fund her hobby. Some things never change. She is still taking fabrics home purchased against her paycheck.

Karen offers Kalamazoo ASG members a 10% discount when they shop with her at:

Karen's Fabric Shop  
57501 North Main Street  
Three Rivers, MI 49093  
269-279-9391

9:30 a.m. – 5 00 p.m., Monday-Friday

9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Saturday

*by Brenda Petrow*

## **YARDAGE SALE**

Our yardage sale is Saturday, April 6, 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at Becky Lerner's. Bring your fabric, patterns, notions and sewing related items to the April meeting, or take them to Becky's house, Friday noon, April 15, and help set up for the sale. Tables are needed - along with your energy and enthusiasm. You may call or e-mail Becky at 269-323-7352 or [sewdaffy@gmail.com](mailto:sewdaffy@gmail.com).