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TOP STORY

## Old Stone Mill Center's fabric sale kicks off a summer full of potential surprising finds

By Jane Kaufman, The Berkshire Eagle  
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Customers shop Sunday at the Old Stone Mill Center's fabric sale in Adams.

JANE KAUFMAN — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

ADAMS — As she touched pieces of ironed and neatly folded cotton fabric, Sue Doucette was finding it tough to exercise discipline.

Doucette has a rule: only buy fabric for the specific project she's working on, rather than just because it's pretty.

"Some days I have it, some days, not so much," she said. "The cash limitation will be good for me today."



Sue Doucette hunts for fabric at the Old Stone Mill Center in Adams on Sunday. The zero waste maker space is now open for its summer hours, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday to Sunday.

JANE KAUFMAN — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

Doucette was shopping Sunday at a fabric sale at the Old Stone Mill Center in Adams, which sells various sundry items that might otherwise be thrown away. Since only about 9 percent of the mill is heated during the winter, this sale kicks off its summer season.

Much of the mill is devoted to cold storage of donated surplus items, but it

also provides a home maker space workshops which include machines for metal fabrication, bicycle and sewing machine repair, a sewing center, picture frame upcycling and equipment for framing, a printmaking teaching studio and upcycled art materials.

The fabric sale went well beyond fabric and included buttons, beads, notions, thread, yarn. The fabrics included swatches of fabric of various sizes, materials and finishes, from rugs and upholstery to quilting materials, all washed, ironed and ready for use in their next life.



Threads are separated by color and type at the Old Stone Mill Center.

JANE KAUFMAN — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

One room is devoted entirely to Waverly brand fabrics

“If I can buy a piece of material for 50 cents, a dollar, that’s good for me,”

Doucette said. "I also really like keeping the fabric out of landfills."



Buttons for sale at the Old Stone Mill Center  
JANE KAUFMAN — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

Noting the closure of Joann Fabric and Crafts in Pittsfield, "Where else am I going to get fabric?" Doucette asked. "Right now I get it from my brother and my nephew, and I make things out of jeans, but maybe I need to wear something besides just denim."

Doucette was wearing a jumper she fashioned, her first project without a pattern. It has shoulder straps and buttons similar to overalls, and lots of pockets.

"I made this, but I'm not liking this bottom half, so I'm thinking of taking [it] off and putting something else, with color," she said. "I also might want to jazz up my denim and maybe put an applique."



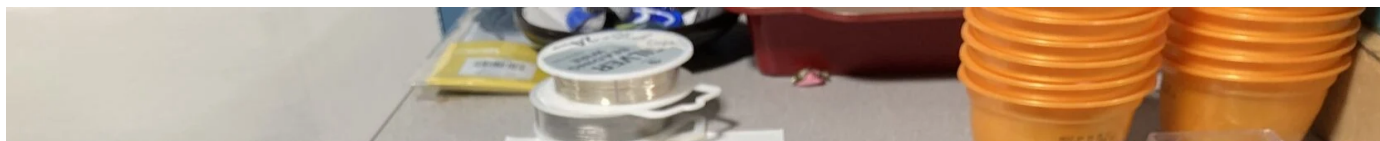
Patterns for sale at the Old Stone Mill Center's fabric sale.

JANE KAUFMAN — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

She was looking for floral prints to sew on a patch of a pretty flower.

Cara Petricca, of Cheshire, was wowed by the experience.

“I came in because I’m doing a silly little project and I was looking to see if they have maybe a weird fabric, never been here before though,” she said. “And this is what I found. I have never been so excited as an artist. I try to be conscientious about not trying to throw stuff away, trying to reuse it, and this place, just, my jaw just dropped. I have never been so excited to discover what I’ve been missing.”





Beads, buttons, thread, yarn and fabric of all kinds were available at the Old Stone Mill Center's fabric sale on Sunday.

JANE KAUFMAN — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

She was hunting for “funky fabric,” she said. “I was hoping there would be some kind of weird patterns that nobody would want and I’d get a great deal. And it’s like a gold mine. Never seen anything like it.”

Ana Gentes is a seamstress who makes wedding dresses for a living. At the Old Stone Mill, she volunteers, teaches sewing and repairs sewing machines.

As she helped out at Sunday’s sale, she donned a reversible apron she designed and created that slips over the head and doesn’t include a belt or tie. All hems are finished, so there are no rough edges, and both sides have pockets.

She said she enjoys volunteering and teaching at the mill.

While it’s technically a business, the owners of the Old Stone Mill, Leni Fried and Mike Augspurger of Cummington, don’t draw salaries, so proceeds from

sales go toward the operation of the 28,000 square foot mill.

Fried and Augspurger received two grants after they bought the mill for \$350,000 in 2015, one for \$325,000 from Art Place America, the other, a \$75,000 capital improvement grant from MassDevelopment.

The mill has been operating as a zero waste maker space for just three years, and this is the third year the fabric sales have been held “in the shoulder season, so in the spring and in the fall, and then it gets really cold.”

With the thousands of items for sale, Fried said people often find the inventory overwhelming.

“It is overwhelming,” said Fried, “It’s like a sensory overload, but in a good way.”

As Doucette checked out, the cash limitation did stop her from buying a few pieces of fabric that she had no immediate use for, but she was able to buy ones that were core to her mission, including a couple with flowers.

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### **Old Stone Mill Center**

2A Grove St. (Route 8) Adams

Summer hours are Friday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For examples of donations Old Stone Mill Center accepts, check its website [here](#)

### **MORE INFORMATION**



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Jane Kaufman

Community Voices Editor