



Wednesday 7 October 2009

Welcome to Issue # 30 of Midweek Moments. This week, as we continue our series of women inventors, we'll be looking at how scientist Patsy Sherman discovered the fabric protector Scotchgard, literally by accident. And in 'Show and Tell', you'll hear all about Cosima's Galaxy. Remember, if you'd like to share one of your own creations with Midweek Moments readers, get in touch with us.

[Click here to read and see the photos of the Pink Triathlon that the 'Blueberries Tri Girls' participated in](#)

Mothers of invention

Patsy Sherman – inventor of Scotchgard

Without this brilliant woman, the world we'd all be living in would be a lot more stained and filthy; think of all the coffee, beetroot, lipstick, ink, blood, pasta sauce, mud and grass stains that would otherwise be splattered all over our collective upholstery, carpet, clothes and shoes if it weren't for Scotchgard fabric protector.

Patsy Sherman was born in the U.S. state of Minnesota in 1930, her brilliant scientific mind already apparent by the time she was a teenager. When her high school aptitude test in 1947 ranked her as most suited to being a housewife, she insisted she be allowed to take the boy's version of the test. This time around, the results reflected her scientific intellect and ranked her as being most suited to chemistry.

After graduating from Gustavus Adolphus College in 1952, she took up a position as research chemist at 3M manufacturing corporation, one of the very few female chemists working for a major company at that time.

It was while she was working at 3M on fluorochemical polymers that the now famous lab accident happened that led directly to the invention of Scotchgard. In Sherman's own words, "We were trying to develop a new kind of rubber for jet aircraft fuel lines, when one of the lab assistants accidentally dropped a glass bottle that contained a batch of synthetic latex I had made. Some of the latex mixture splashed on the assistant's canvas tennis shoes and the result was remarkable."

What was remarkable about it was that not only was the spill on the assistant's white tennis shoe completely unable to be removed, but it also resisted further soiling. Sherman and her colleague, Sam Smith, instantly recognized the practical and commercial potential of this serendipitous finding and set to work on a way of manufacturing the substance as a protectant of stains for clothing and other fabrics. The invention, now known as Scotchgard, was first sold commercially in 1956, although Sherman and Smith didn't take out the patent until 1973. Ironically, in the mid 1950s while Scotchgard was still in the developmental process, Sherman was not allowed inside the textile mill during testing, due to draconian rules that forbade women on the premises. She was forced to wait outside the building for test results.

Patsy Sherman was inducted into Minnesota's Inventors Hall of fame in 1983 and today has been a member of the American Chemical Society for over 50 years, a true pioneer not just in the field of chemical research but also for women's rights.

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*Patsy Sherman
in the early days*



Scotchgard



Patsy Sherman

Waterloo

Workshop with Sue Daley from Patchwork with Busy Fingers

Needleturn appliqué, English paper piecing and some embroidery will be covered in this one day workshop



Tuesday, 3 November 2009 or Wednesday, 4 November 2009
9.30am – 3.30pm



Cost: \$60.00 includes pattern, paper pieces, class fee and lunch

To book a place in this class [click here](#)

Fabric Kits Available

\$150.00 - Includes all fabrics to complete the quilt top and binding.

The background fabric is a 55% Linen and 45% Cotton mix with all others fabrics being from the Rouenneries range of fabric by French General.

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Show and Tell

Show us the item and tell us the story

Cosima Bardy—Cosima's Galaxy

How long have you been making quilts?

I have only been making quilts for just less than three years. I started making little things, like wall hangings and place mats things like that and found that I really enjoyed it. I then decided to make a quilt for my great grandson. It was my first quilt ever. It was foundation pieced and it won first place at our local quilt show for the best use of colour. I have now made about seven quilts in total.



I made this green quilt for myself, which was a real challenge. It was another foundation pieced quilt.



This quilt I am in the process of making for my daughter Esther. I really love the fabrics in this quilt.

If you have an item you'd like profiled in 'Show and Tell', click [here](#) to email us your contact details.

Til next week!
The Blueberries Team.