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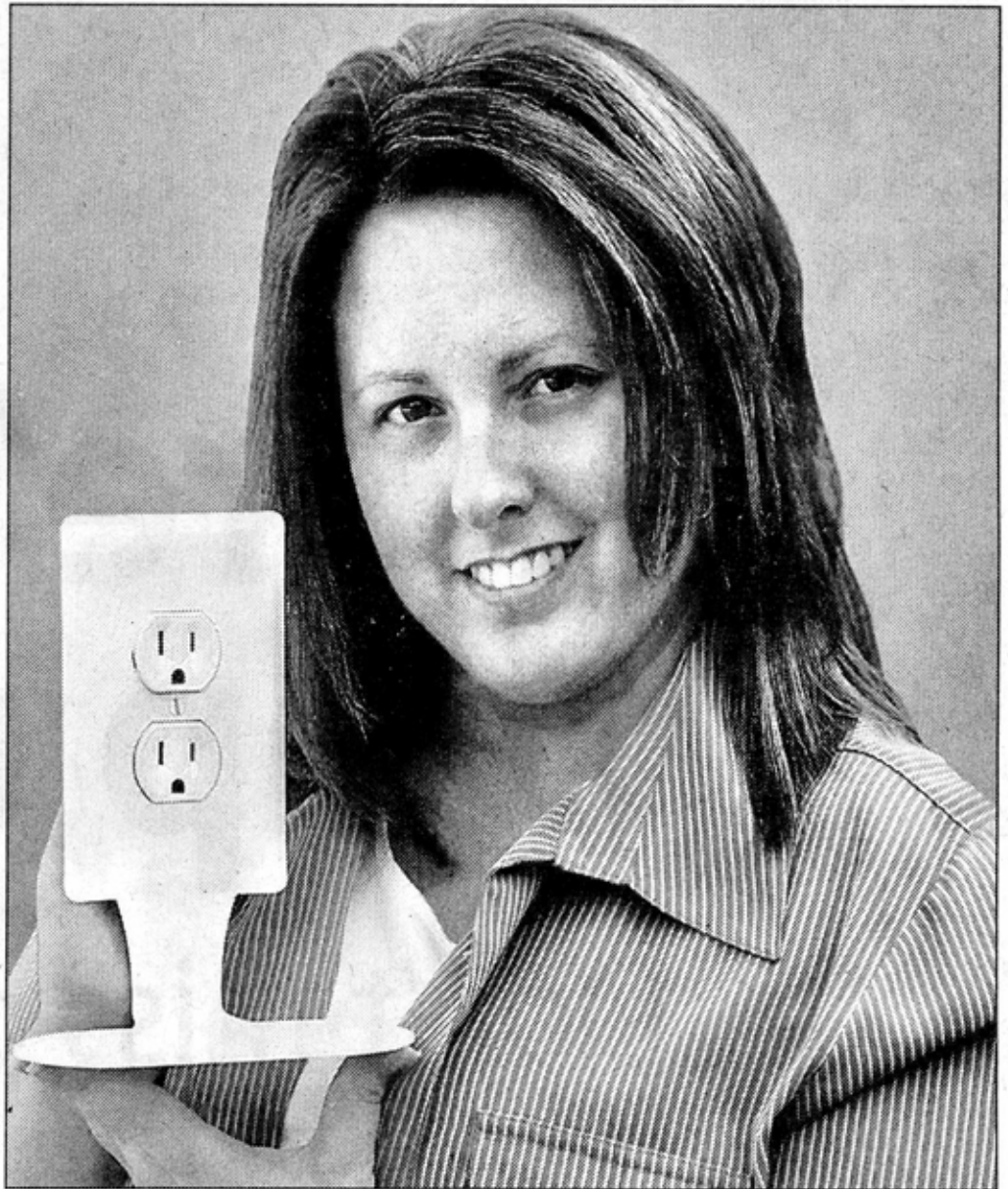
# Area woman invents product

BY LISA MILLER  
News Journal

PLYMOUTH — When Lynn Fetzer-Westmeister turned 29 in March, she made a list of 29 things she wanted to accomplish. Besides learning another language and having husband Shawn teach her how to play guitar or piano, she wanted to patent a product.

A month later, irritation over having to crawl around and move a night stand just to get her cell phone plugged into the charger led her to come up with the Power Shelf. Phones, candle warmers, iPods, electric shavers, laptops can all be set on a Power Shelf, the cord wrapped up neatly and ready to be plugged into the outlet.

Fetzer-Westmeister had a little head start on some entrepreneurs, as she is part Fetzer Manufacturing Co., a family-owned business started by her father, William Fetzer, in 1985. The manufacturing facility does machining, turning, stamping, forming and more. Fetzer-Westmeister said, "There is truly almost nothing that we cannot fabricate."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Lynn Fetzer-Westmeister displays a Power Shelf, a product she created to keep electronic devices and cords organized and accessible when charging.

The company has 16 employees, but will soon bring more on board to boost Power Shelf production. "It is truly amazing how the product will not only help to continue to create jobs at our facility but affects the jobs of others as well from our material suppliers, packaging supplier, commercial producers, printing suppliers. It is a true domino effect of how one product affects many others," she said.

"Between my husband and I, we hold three degrees and six certifications in the fields of accounting, advertising, business and computer engineering and I have been involved with the manufacturing field since I was a child. Shawn and I have prepared ourselves for where the Power Shelf is taking us without knowing it."

Plymouth Mayor Keith Hebble said, "She's got a cute little product. It's a very innovative product. ... You slap your hand on your forehead and think it's about time somebody came up with that."

Police Chief Charles Doan is equally effusive. "I fell in love with it," he said. He has a large version of the Power Shelf for his phone and charger.

Fetzer-Westmeister responded to questions about her life's path and her product via e-mail.

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### **Did you plan to be an inventor when you grew up?**

**A:** I don't think inventor was something that I expressed I wanted to do, it just happened. I think the way both my parents encouraged me while growing up allowed me to be who I am today. I get my creativity from my mom. I went to work with my dad every chance I got. I even have my very own 2-by-4-foot desk and small red chair. I would roll it beside his big desk or roll it in front of his so we were face-to-face. He always gave me "important" jobs to do. I would walk prints to the engineer or the shop foreman. I feel I am a complete mix of the best parts of my parents. Life is full of twists and turns and I have always learned to make the best of each journey God sends my way. I am open to whatever the Power Shelf will bring my way.

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### **Your invention of the Power**

## **Learn More**

### **WANT ONE?**

Find out more, or order a Power Shelf, at [www.BuyPowerShelf.com](http://www.BuyPowerShelf.com). The original Power Shelf also can be purchased in Mansfield at Wireless-Mansfield, 1206 Park Avenue West, next to Kroger and Hobby Lobby. In Ashland, the item is available at Wireless-Ashland, 25 Amberwood Parkway, across from the Wal-Mart Super Center.

### **JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

Fetzer Manufacturing Co. plans to add employees. For details, e-mail [Jobs@BuyPowerShelf.com](mailto:Jobs@BuyPowerShelf.com), [Lynn@BuyPowerShelby.com](mailto:Lynn@BuyPowerShelby.com), [Sales@BuyPowerShelf.com](mailto:Sales@BuyPowerShelf.com) or [Orders@BuyPowerShelf.com](mailto:Orders@BuyPowerShelf.com).

**News Journal staff report**

### **Shelf apparently grew out of frustration over how electrical outlets are configured. How long did it take you from actual "aha" moment to getting the product out the door? What were some of the challenges you met along the way?**

**A:** On Sunday, April 20, I came up with the idea and discussed it with my husband and we drew it up. By the end of the workday Monday I had the first prototype to take home and try out. Once I installed it and put my cell phone on it and saw how well it worked I was ecstatic and knew I wanted to make these available for everyone. That night Shawn and I drew up a few more ideas to take to work. Tuesday morning I called my mom and told her that I wanted to take the Power Shelf to market. On that day, six months of research and developing began.

During the six months, customers, vendors, drivers and sales people would come in, see the Power Shelf and ask about it and fall in love with the idea. In October, the Power Shelf became available online and orders were filled as they came in. Surprisingly, we have not come across any challenges. We spend a lot of money on handheld electronics, and the Power Shelf gives you a location to charge your items so you always know where it is.

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### **You started out with a basic size and color. How many Power Shelf products are available now?**

**A:** There are nine different molds for sale online in round and square outlets, and so many more that will be released. I don't want to flood the market and give consumers too many to choose from right away. There is nothing like this on the market and consumers need to take in

the new idea and realize how they can use the current ones available. If I would release the hundreds that I have designed. Then someone could feel overwhelmed and not know where to start, which one to buy first.

We did research on items that people would want to use the Power Shelf for. We then sized a model to the products that we studied, making it meet the size requirements to be universal in use with many types of products. The colors were chosen using my favorite colors through our powder coat supplier. I have also started designing my own custom colors of powder coat finishes which will be available in 2009.

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### **Where can people buy the Power Shelf?**

**A:** We get a lot of inquiries from independently owned hardware, cell phone stores and other types of retail stores, not only from Ohio but all over the United States. It takes a little while to work out all the details, but in January several stores will be stocked and selling the Power Shelf. We are now getting regional and national large retailers who are looking at putting the Power Shelf products in their plans.

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### **What's your advice for people like you who see a need, then want to fill it with a profitable product?**

**A:** If you never take the opportunity or risk, you will always wonder what could have been. Don't be afraid to ask for help, but remember to protect yourself. A lot of ordinary people have created a lot of extraordinary things, so never doubt your ambition.

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