

Shane Staley's 2011 Grant Report



Photo by Ryan Zeller

After working in architecture for several years, I decided to turn my attention toward a career that I could focus not only my conceptual mind, but also my physical abilities and gain the opportunity to see projects from conception through completion on a personal level. I enjoy working with my hands and focusing on precision with real tangible objects; a skill that is difficult to develop when working primarily on the computer as is often the case with architecture. My interest in furniture began as an attempt to fill voids in my own space with projects such as a plywood dresser, MDF bookshelves, a

built-in bar, and a set of matching upholstered couches. As I became interested in higher quality projects of solid wood, I soon learned that my goals in building furniture had grown outside my skill level.

I discovered the twelve-week intensive program at the Center for Furniture Craftmanship and proceeded to ask furniture builders that I knew in my area about its reputation. Everything about the program seemed ideal for me. Not only did the program seem to be geared towards my specific needs of learning about the properties of various wood species, various types of joinery and finishing; the setting of rural Maine for three months seemed perfect to fully immerse myself in practice away from the distractions of home.



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The Center for Furniture Craftmanship not only met my expectations, it exceeded them. I was able to build to a level far beyond what I thought myself capable of. This program is unique in that it was perfectly tailored to give more than a surface level understanding of the techniques and the community there was anxious to help with any specific problems that arose. I was able to design my own projects and push the limits of myself and occasionally even my instructors. The sense of accomplishment in the end brought me much more joy and confidence than I could have hoped for.

I now hope to bring these new skills to a career in furniture building. I fully understand that in three months one cannot hope to become a master woodworker, but I realize that I learned more in that time under the staff and community at the Center for Furniture Craftmanship than I would have on my own in a far greater amount of time.

The cost of the program and expenses, including travel to the school, necessary tools and materials, and living expenses greatly exceeded my budget. The grant that I received from the Furniture Society made it possible for me to attend and not sacrifice the quality of projects I hoped to build. I can honestly say that I would not have been able to achieve what I did without it.