



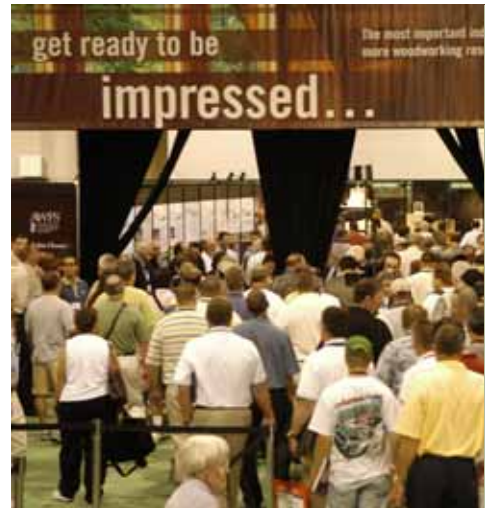
## THE STUDENT DESIGN COMPETITION

The Association of Woodworking & Furnishings Suppliers® (AWFS®) created the Student Design Contest in 1999 as part of an industry education initiative adopted that year by its Board of Directors.

One of the goals of that initiative focused on ways to create a better bridge between industry and education. There was (and still is) a large gap between the two. High school shop classes are still in decline and support for technical vocational programs continues to wane in many areas. Where it does exist, “woodshop” curriculum has often not advanced with the industry, nor recognized how technical wood manufacturing has become. Teachers were feeling isolated and there was no ready source to identify woodworking programs and allow them to connect with each other, let alone with industry.

### The First AWFS® Student Design Contest

It was in this environment that the Student Design Contest was born. From the beginning, it was decided that this contest must include high school students, which distinguished it from other student woodworking contests of the time. AWFS® sought to recognize high school students and teachers by encouraging them to participate, acknowledging that high school is the key time for making career-setting choices. At about the same time the contest came into being, another fledgling program, WoodLINKS USA, was getting off the ground. WoodLINKS is an industry-education partnership that brings wood technology programs in schools together with local industry to build the core curriculum. A standard skill set is taught and students are tested at the end of the program, producing highly desirable and employable graduates. The Student Design Contest gave the WoodLINKS teachers motivation and an avenue of expression for the talents being developed through this program. It is no surprise that most of the high school entries are coming from WoodLINKS schools. In addition to the new encouragement for high schools, the contest has ignited interest and participation from technical schools, community colleges and postsecondary design, architectural and engineering programs across North America.



# INTRODUCTION



**Myles Multhauf**  
*Eight-Drawer Mission Style Dresser*

The first Student Design Contest premiered at the 1999 AWFS® Fair in Anaheim, California, drawing a modest number of entries. That number doubled for the 2001 contest and doubled again in 2003. The 2005 submissions reflected a 40% increase from a widening number of schools and geographic regions across the United States and Canada.

AWFS® wanted to make the contest as accessible as possible to all students at accredited schools. Therefore there is no entry fee, and once selected as a finalist, AWFS® pays to ship the entries to the AWFS® Fair for display and final judging. The association also underwrites much of the cost for both students and teachers to attend the Fair, providing hotel accommodations and a travel allowance. Teachers and students are encouraged to meet and exchange information with other schools, as well as view the hundreds of exhibit displays of the latest industry innovations and make connections with industry leaders.

Another feature of the contest is the support for school wood technology programs. The school of the student who captures the Best of Show award receives a check for \$2,500 for the school's program.

## Sam Maloof Creates Best of Show Sculpture

In 2001, renowned wood artist Sam Maloof was commissioned to create a special sculpture for the Best of Show winner for each biennial show. A coveted feature of the contest, this sculptural award is designed by the internationally revered woodworking artist, and when his schedule permits, he attends the show and presents it himself. While Sam maintains an air of gentle humility, students are near speechless to have his full attention focused on their projects. It is a special moment at the trade show's Recognition Reception, when all finalists and their teachers are honored and presented their awards.

## Providing the Leadership

Setting the parameters of the contest is the AWFS® Student Design Committee, a sub-committee of the Education Committee. Playing a leadership and guiding role for the contest, Duane Griffiths, Education Manager for Stiles Machinery, Inc., has served as the Committee Chair since the inception. For each contest, a new committee comprised of

industry volunteers is created. The Committee is charged with setting policy and rules, making recommendations for revisions and for appointing a panel of judges—drawing from various aspects of the industry including design, manufacturing, retail, education and trade publications.

## Changing Perceptions

Through programs like the Student Design Contest, AWFS® hopes to build awareness of the importance of the relationship between industry and education. In addition, the contest helps to change outdated perceptions of the career opportunities and skill levels in the woodworking industry. School programs need to reflect the changes and advancements caused by technology and a global economy, as well as bring awareness of the existence of substantial job openings offering competitive salaries for skilled workers in a diverse range of career paths. A sampling includes high tech machinery operation and repair, computer controlled machinery operators, sales, international trade, teaching, forestry, milling, hardware, machinery and product design, as well as R&D related to coatings, finishings and innovative wood products that combine with metals, plastics and solid surfaces.

The profile of the students enrolled in career technical education classes also needs to move away from outdated, unflattering characterizations. The 2003 Contest finalists included two high school valedictorians and two salutatorians. In 2005, another winning entry came from a high school valedictorian. Entrants are coming from high schools and technical schools as well as prestigious universities across North America. The caliber of the work completed by these students exceeds all expectations and continues to “dazzle” the trade show attendee audience.

## Inspiring Work

While the caliber of work submitted in the contests had been impressive from the beginning, the 2003 entries, at both the high school and college level, astounded exhibitors, attendees, industry personnel and the trade press. There was a tremendous buzz at the show surrounding the contest, which resulted in the publication of *Fresh Wood*, a full color art book showcasing all the finalists' work with numerous photographs and personalized project descriptions.



**Sarah Puchosic**  
*Links*



**Skylar Davis**  
*The EasySit Mission Recliner*

# INTRODUCTION

## THE DESIGN CONTEST JUDGES

The judges represent five areas of the industry to lend a variety of perspectives to the judging process. Those include manufacturing, retail, design, education and trade press. The 2005 student design judging panel included:

### DESIGN

Scott Grove  
Designer, Sculptor, Owner of Concept Grove  
(Rochester, New York)

Charles Monaco, Jr.  
Design Director at Furniture Design Studios, Inc.  
(Huntington, New York)  
President of American Society of Furniture Designers (ASFD)

### EDUCATION

Julia Beamish  
Professor of Housing at Virginia Tech (Blacksburg, Virginia )

Gary Rogowski  
Craftsman and Director of The Northwest Woodworking Studio  
(Portland, Oregon)

### MANUFACTURING

Craig Bren  
Vice President of Sales for Tuohy Furniture Corp.  
(Chatfield, Minnesota)  
Technical Consultant for Tuohy Forest Products

### RETAIL

Brian Dyches  
President/CEO of Atmospheric Group  
(Laguna Niguel, California)

Michelle Olsen  
Interior Designer with Kubala/Washatko Architects  
(Cedarburg, Wisconsin)

### TRADE PRESS

Anatole Burkin  
Executive Editor for *Fine Woodworking* magazine  
(Newtown, Connecticut)

Helen Kuhl  
Editor in Chief of *Custom Woodworking Business* and *Closet*  
magazines (Lincolnshire, Illinois)



**Pictured L to R:** Julia Beamish, Charles Monaco, Jr., Nancy Fister, Scott Grove, Brian Dyches, Gary Rogowski, Craig Bren, Michelle Olsen, Anatole Burkin



**Judges**  
Michelle Olsen and Scott Grove examining an entry



**John Maher**  
Contour

Teachers across the U.S. responded with excitement about the book and began incorporating it into classroom use. Cliff Durand of Dakota High School told us, "I have shown it to my students and they are inspired by it—a feat hard to do with high school students." Mark Smith of Shiloh High School (whose students participated in 2003) commented, "Students, teachers, administrators and parents have all come down to see the book. They couldn't believe how nice all the projects looked. It helped everyone see that their students/children were among an elite group."

In 2005, 160 entries came in from ten high schools and twenty-three postsecondary schools. Eighteen of those schools were participating for the first time. A total of 58 pieces made the cut as finalists, chosen for display at the July AWFS® Fair in Las Vegas.

The trade show's new location in Las Vegas has added to the level of excitement for participants. The vibrant city and its magnificent desert backdrop lend awe and inspiration to many young people who have not yet ventured far from home. The size and scope of the show's 900 exhibitors, demonstrations and education programs (the education programs are offered free to the contest students and teachers) are all a learning experience created by the contest.

The contest currently offers first place and honorable mention awards in several categories. Two special awards include the Best of Show and the People's Choice. It is conceivable that one entry can capture a First Place, the Best of Show and the People's Choice awards—and it happened in 2001 to Steve Lacey of Cerritos College in Southern California (now an instructor at the college) and in 2005 to Joshua Williams of Rockingham Community College in North Carolina.

With *Fresh Wood v.2*, you can glimpse for yourself the impressive level of work that is being produced, gain information on the schools with dynamic instructors and wood programs, as well as learn about WoodLINKS USA.

**Nancy Fister**  
**Director of Education Programs, AWFS®**

More information on the Student Design Contest can be found at [www.awfs.org](http://www.awfs.org)