

# Love your back!

*Furniture maker strives for beauty, health and comfort*

**BY KATHRYN CAWDREY**  
The fresh smell of wood shavings and light scent of tung oil filled the airy ground-floor workshop at Geoffrey Warner Studio in Stonington. The pleasant fragrances embody the fine furniture-making that goes on there.

Stonington may be best

1970s and early 1980s.

Since moving to Stonington, where he was drawn to the tight-knit community and felt at home, Warner has produced fine furnishings ranging widely from a cherry and beech dresser with drawers to a conference table made from a great big leaf maple tree found in Oregon.

Warner's best known piece, though, may be the Owl Stool conceived during the Great Recession nine years ago. He wanted to make a more comfortable studio stool for himself. He kept shaving down the wooden seat where the sitz or sitting bones

See Map:  
Page 42 - H4



The Owl Stool was designed to help relieve back pain by easing spine tension and sitting pressures. The cherry seat is sculpted to emphasize the natural beauty of the wood. The legs are made of ash.

known as the Maine port that lands the most lobster. But it's also associated with famed artists, coffee-roasting and Owl Stools, among other things.

The latter two items go together at this seaside town's 44 North Café (70 Main St.), where you can sip a freshly brewed cup of Sumatra coffee and sit a spell atop an Owl Stool and feel your spine straighten up.

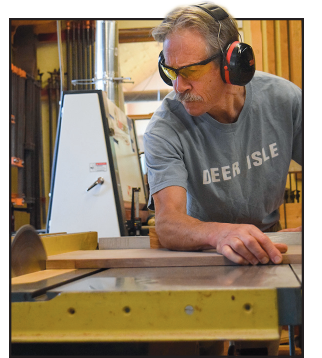
"That's the whole idea behind owl ergonomics: The philosophy of ergonomics becomes part of your lifestyle," explained Stonington furniture maker Geoffrey Warner, whose studio also is on Main Street. "All the furniture that we make is tactile; it's about ease of moving around in your lifestyle."

A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, the Stonington craftsman and artist studied photography under Harry Callahan and furniture design under Danish master Tage Frid in the



Family members, representing four generations, hold up their completed Owl Stools assembled as part of a workshop at Geoffrey Warner Studio in Stonington. Geared for ages 10 and up, the workshop's participants first buy a kit and then sign up for the \$35 class.

GEOFFREY WARNER STUDIO PHOTOS



Furniture maker and designer Geoffrey Warner says about 10 to 15 percent of his business are commissioned pieces such as the cabinet that he is cutting a piece for.

rest and bear one's weight. He wound up drilling right through the seat. Two holes resembling an owl's eyes remained.

Working with a local chiropractor, Warner fine-tuned the design to create an ergonomically correct seat found in his Owl line of stools, chairs, perches and standing desks. He also sells Owl Stool kits and holds workshops enabling customers and local residents to

Continued on Page 35

## Deer Isle-Stonington

View map on  
page 33, 14

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## Owl Stools

Continued from Page 29  
assemble their own pieces.

What next for Warner? The “sky hook” is an idea that is percolating over his head. The prototype consists of a piece of plywood, attached to the ceiling, with a 4-inch hook drilled into it. The concept is to thread a

***“I think people use it because it doesn’t look like any other chair,”***

— 44 North Café Barista Nicole Nolan

resistance band through the hook, and exercise one’s arms without having to get up from a sitting position.

“After many years prac-

ticing as a designer, craftsman and solutionary, I still find passion working with the natural beauty of wood,” Warner reflects on his website. “I said to a customer recently that I am a wood doctor. They said ‘Really?’ No, just kidding [he replied], but I love seeing how the Owl has provided such healthy, ergonomic comfort and relief for so many.”



GEOFFREY WARNER STUDIO PHOTO

Workshop participants are taught how to use various hand tools and woodworking techniques to assemble their Owl Stools.

*The  
Geoffrey Warner  
Studio*

Where: 43 N. Main St.  
in Stonington.  
For more info,  
call 367-6555,  
email [info@geoffrey-warnerstudio.com](mailto:info@geoffrey-warnerstudio.com)  
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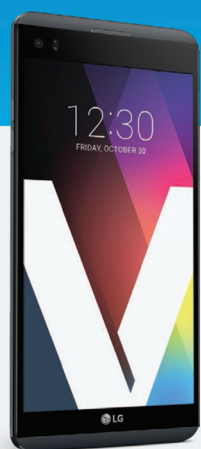
OUT & ABOUT PHOTO BY KATHRYN CAWDREY

Off and on, furniture maker and designer Geoffrey Warner has been working on a prototype for his Skyhook. His concept involves attaching a piece of plywood and hook to the ceiling. A resistance band, threaded through the hook, provides a way to exercise one’s arms while sitting or standing at a desk or a work station.



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