

Retiree Takes Up Woodworking

By JOHN ZANES

GILMANTON — Now that he has retired, Dean Dudley is well into another career.

Two years ago, looking ahead to retirement this year, Dudley started working with wood. He has a shop at his home on Loon Pond Rd., a small shop for display, both of which can stand some expansion, more potential customers than he can really handle, and orders enough to keep him busy until next May.

He has to work within the strict limits of what the government will allow him to earn, so he tries to pace his work so that it will "keep him out of mischief." The biggest problem is that people who see his work and want to buy lamps, doll beds or bureaus, benches or tables or perhaps

but never could." The investment in equipment and material, as well as the time to work out designs for the items he makes, didn't match the situation of raising a family.

Coming from Concord to Gilmanton almost 30 years ago, Dudley has done a number of things. He worked as a mechanic, has farmed, been a cattle dealer, and "drove truck as much as anything... I've been a jack-of-all-trades... I guess that's what's let me live so long," he said.

A big, gentle man, Dudley finds particular satisfaction in working with wood. At one side of his shop is an old easy

chair. He pointed to a stove in the corner. "If I'm working and want to have a cup of coffee, it's there on the drum, and it's hot. I can sit there in that chair and read my Bible if I want to." He pointed to a wide pine board resting on cross-pieces along the ceiling of the shop, from the chair to the other end of the room.

"I look at that board... sometimes it gets concave, sometimes it crests... I know it's moisture, but that stuff's alive."

Like any woodworking shop, the place has a pleasant smell of fresh cut wood, and a pleasant combination of clutter and efficiency, sawdust and shavings on the floor, wood dust on tools and plane surfaces, equipment

standing where the craftsman likes to use it.

Dudley explained his technique for finishing tables to a customer; a coat of stain, four coats, hand-rubbed, of urethane. "If you charged for your time you're not making money," said the customer positively. "I know that," said Dudley smiling. He smiles a lot; he is a good-natured man, and it is clear that he likes what he is doing. "I'm happy here," he said simply.

He has shown and sold work at several craftsman's shows sponsored by the Arthritis Foundation. Last May he was in the show at Gunstock; in January he was

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in the show at the Newington Mall. On Oct. 15 and 16 he will exhibit work at the Rockingham Mall in Salem.

Dudley likes wood and working with it, and takes clear and justifiable pride in the things he makes. He likes the pace of his work, and he likes the fringe benefits in terms of time for quiet thinking that the nature of the activity allows.

"The greatest thing that can happen to a person is to get to know himself," said Dudley, and smiled.

Gilmanton Woodworker at Saw

Dean Dudley of Loon Pond Rd., Gilmanton, took up woodworking as a retirement job. The old band saw pictured here came from a furniture factory. Dudley has

displayed his work at a number of craftsman's shows and will be at the Rockingham Mall in Salem later this month.