

From hobby



Photo courtesy of Nantahala Outdoor Center

to career:

Transforming your pastime into a profession

Your hobby could kindle the spark for a new career whether you enjoy riding the rapids, firing pots, or teaching an old dog a new trick.

by Olivia Crosby

Imagine being paid for having fun. Many people make that dream a reality by finding a career related to their hobbies. Some turn their pastimes into paychecks, selling what they once made or did only in their free time. Others find jobs that use hobby-related skills or are related to their hobbies in another way.

If you're looking for an occupation to match your interests, examining your hobbies is a great way to start. This article describes how some people used their hobbies to find a career and explores a few ways you can do the same. The first section profiles people in hobby-centered occupations. The second section offers suggestions for turning your favorite pastime into a career and for matching your interests to occupations. The last section provides ideas for locating more information, including Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) resources.

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Craft artists often use special tools for cutting metal and other materials.

Hobbies go to work: Pastime into primetime

Maybe you like drawing, sculpting, or creating some other art form. Or perhaps you enjoy training animals—or taming waterways. Whatever your favorite leisure activity, you can probably find an occupational niche for it in the working world. The following pages show how some people found their niches as craftshow artists, dog trainers, and river guides.

Art student to craftshow artist

When he was in high school, Hayne Bayless spent every free period in the art room. Now, he makes his living as a potter in Ivoryton, Connecticut, selling his creations at craftshows and galleries across the country.

The day-to-day work of a craft artist depends on the craft. Some artists work with glass, cutting and soldering stained glass or heating and shaping it into sculpture. Others work with fabric, weaving rugs and other textiles or designing and sewing clothes. Still others make jewelry or metal artwork. In fact, craft artists make nearly every type of handmade product, from ink stamps to baskets to papier mache.

Bayless spends most days in his studio creating pots and other clay vessels. His first step in making pottery is to sketch a rough picture of the piece he wants to make. But he stands ready to change his plans if new ideas strike as he works. Using a process called handbuilding, Bayless sculpts each piece of pottery. He rolls the clay into slabs, then cuts, molds, and bends it into shape and adds texture. He smoothes separate parts together until he has the shape he wants. Then, he puts the piece on a shelf to dry and fires it in a hot oven, called a kiln. After the

firing, Bayless paints the pottery with a glaze made of chemicals he mixes to give the piece color and texture. He completes the piece by firing it a second time.

Darlys Ewoldt, a metalworker in Chicago, also spends most of each day creating art. She, too, starts with a rough sketch of the piece she wants to make. After drawing her design, she hammers sections of metal into shape. When she is satisfied with the metal's form, she paints it with chemicals to change its color. Just as potters experiment with new glazes, Ewoldt experiments to see how different chemicals react to various metals.

Furniture maker Craig Stevens prepares more detailed plans than potters and metalworkers do before starting a piece. Stevens, who works in his shop in Sunbury, Ohio, often creates furniture to fit a specific space in customers' homes. He carefully drafts each part of the piece on graph paper and meets with customers to perfect his concept. Then, he uses woodworking tools to saw, shape, and carve the wood. Each step in Stevens' work builds on earlier steps, so he needs to plan far in advance. In a final and favorite step, Stevens adds carvings and finishes to the furniture surfaces.

As they work, craft artists are aware of consumer tastes as well as their own artistic impulses. "It's a balancing act between

Craft artists make nearly every type of handmade product.

what the market wants and what you want to make," says Bayless. Based on their knowledge of what has sold at other shows, craft artists have a sense of what is popular. Some balance the demands of the marketplace with the demands of their art by making a few experimental pieces for every show—and they may discover that these pieces are surprisingly profitable. "At first, I thought that I could sell only jewelry at shows," says Ewoldt. "But I was becoming more interested in metal sculpture. After testing at a few shows, I realized there was a market for it."

The chance for creative experimentation is highly rewarding for most craft artists. As Stevens says, "I love it when a customer tells me, 'Make me anything. Whatever it is, I'm sure I'll love it.'" But craft artists don't spend every moment in artistic freedom. "Sometimes, I make a piece when I don't feel like it because someone has ordered it," says Bayless. Other craft artists decide to repeat the same or similar work to

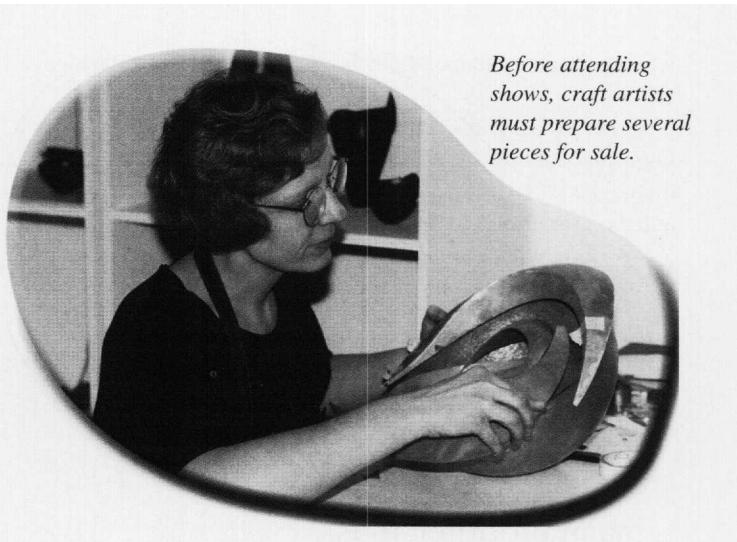
meet demand and earn higher profits.

An important part of professional crafting is finding a way to sell one's creations. Art and craft shows provide a forum for crafters to display their wares and explain their work to potential customers. Most craft artists research shows to decide which to exhibit in and then apply to the best by filling out forms. In addition to describing their pieces and work process, craft artists submit several photographs of their work with each application. Ewoldt photographs her own sculpture because she learned the technique in art school. But many craft artists hire a product photographer to take application photos for them.

Ewoldt, Bayless, and Stevens attend two to five shows a year. But most craft artists attend more, especially those whose work is less expensive or takes less time to make. Until recently, Christine Casey, who makes clay ornaments in Acton, Massachusetts, applied and traveled to more than 50 shows every year. Many were far from home. "I was on the road 30 weekends a year," she says. Casey now attends fewer shows because she receives orders at her studio from several wholesalers she met at previous shows. Those wholesalers sell her work to retail stores. And, like many craft artists, Casey also receives orders through a website she maintains.

Craft artists also sell their work in craft malls and art galleries. This kind of selling requires its own preparation. Craft artists search for galleries that attract customers who would be interested in their work. Then, they apply to the gallery by sending photos of their work with a letter of introduction. If the work sells, the artist receives a percentage of the selling price.

Earnings. BLS does not have earnings data for craftshow artists. But according to a survey sponsored by the Craft Organizations



Before attending shows, craft artists must prepare several pieces for sale.

Directors' Association, workers had median craft-related earnings of \$22,000 in 1999—meaning half earned more than that amount and half earned less. Many survey respondents sold crafts part time while pursuing other professions. Those who made and sold crafts full time usually earned considerably more. According to the survey, glassworkers, who make stained glass or glass sculptures, had the highest earnings: an average of \$38,237 annually. In earnings rank, glassworkers were followed by metalsmiths, leatherworkers, and clayworkers.

Beginning earnings can be low and unsteady as craft artists struggle to increase sales. Many artists hold second jobs or rely on savings during their first years in crafting.

Characteristics. Creativity is essential for any craft artist. Most develop their creativity by practicing different arts and crafts and studying the work of established artists.

Crafting also takes persistence. It takes Bayless at least 4 months to have enough pieces to sell at a show. He usually spends 6 to 8 hours in the studio but often spends more than 12 hours a day when preparing for a show. And Bayless is an experienced crafter; novices usually need more time. "You have to be patient when things take longer than you expect," Stevens says. "That happens all the time in the beginning."

Preparation. Becoming a craft artist requires mastery of a craft, and there are several ways to accomplish this. Many craft artists get a formal education in the arts. Ewoldt, for instance, earned a master's degree in fine arts before she began her career. Stevens earned a bachelor's degree in art and attended an expert woodworking school.

Some craft artists learn their trade in workshops and short-term classes while they maintain other jobs. Bayless is one example. He started making pottery in high school but never studied it in college. Only after earning a degree in journalism and



Crafting requires creativity and persistence.

writing for a newspaper did he begin to take classes at a local art school.

Other artists learn primarily by practice. Casey started making ornaments for family and friends. Before she started selling them, she perfected her technique by reading instruction books and experimenting.

Working with a more experienced craft artist is another good way to learn. "It is very helpful to study with an expert before

Some craft artists learn their trade in workshops and classes while they maintain other jobs.

starting on your own," says Ewoldt, who completed a 2-year apprenticeship with a commercial jewelymaker before selling her own creations. Apprenticeships not only teach craft artists new crafting skills, they also expose artists to the business aspects of selling crafts. There are plenty of apprenticeship opportunities; more than 16 percent of craft artists hire assistants, according the Craft Organizations Directors' study.

Part of the business preparation craft artists need is learning how to record income and expenses and to set prices. "The most successful people research the market before they start," says Casey. "They visit craftshows and artshops and giftshops to see what prices other people charge. Then, they figure out how much time and money it takes to make their pieces."

Most artists begin by selling their work at small, community-based shows. Later, they apply to juried shows and offer their work to local galleries.

More information. There are many national organizations that provide information to professional craft artists. They include the following:

American Craft Council
72 Spring St., 6th Floor
New York, NY 10012-4019
(212) 274-0630
<http://www.craftcouncil.org>

HandMade in America
PO Box 2089
Asheville, NC 28802
(828) 252-0121
<http://www.wnccrafts.org>

National Association of Independent Artists
PO Box 334
Dundee, IL 60118-0334
<http://naia-artists.org>

Some associations are dedicated to particular crafts and to specific geographic areas. Most public libraries maintain lists of these organizations, as do county governments, community colleges, and art schools.

Industry magazines, such as *The Crafts Report*, online at <http://www.craftsreport.com>, and *Sunshine Artist*, online at <http://sunshineartist.com>, also maintain lists of craftshows and offer advice to beginning professionals.

Pet owner to pet trainer

Matthew Margolis' family owned four dogs while he was growing up. Taking care of them was his favorite pastime. Today, he owns a training business in Los Angeles, hosts a dog training television show, and teaches others how to train. "I've always loved animals," he says, "and I made my passion my profession."

Barbara Giella, a dog trainer and behavior counselor in New York City, also found her career through love of a pet. She changed occupations from college professor to dog trainer after learning to train her puppy. She teaches dogs to be good companions. Trainers instruct dogs to respond to commands. In the process, they turn dogs into mannerly housemates and teach them to stop dangerous or annoying activities, such as chasing cars or stealing food.

Giella and Margolis, like many trainers, go to owners' homes for private consultations. They often are asked to solve specific problems: climbing onto furniture, biting, and jumping on people are some examples. "We find out why the dog is behaving that way so we can change the behavior," says Giella. "Dogs have to be taught how to live with people. It doesn't come naturally." In-house training also helps dogs with territorial issues. One of Giella's more challenging problems is helping people raise puppies in cramped city apartments.

The first step in training a dog is to evaluate its personality. Trainers vary their technique to suit the dog's temperament. With a shy dog, they speak in gentle tones; with an assertive dog, they might be more firm.

When meeting a dog, trainers choose their gestures and movements carefully. Like many trainers, Margolis says that too casual a posture shows the dog that the trainer is not in control. But standing too close or using quick movements can be threatening. Tone of voice is also important. Margolis starts every session with an enthusiastic, high-pitched greeting that attracts the dog and sets it at ease.

To teach commands, many trainers put the dog on a leash, move the dog into the proper position while speaking the command, and then praise the dog when it performs the task. Sometimes, trainers use food to lure the dog into the correct position. Hundreds of repetitions later—inside and outside, on the leash and off—the dog's response to the command is reliable.

To stop an undesirable behavior, some trainers give a stern "No." while using a quick pull of the leash or some other corrective measure. Other trainers teach dogs an alternative, acceptable behavior. Giella, for instance, keeps dogs from jumping on visitors by teaching them to sit when guests arrive. While they work, trainers make sure the dogs are happy and paying attention. They watch for signs that a dog is angry or ready to bite.

Most well-trained pets know how to sit, stay, lie down, come, and drop an object. Some learn complicated tricks, including following and pointing to scents, fetching objects, or running through dog agility courses.

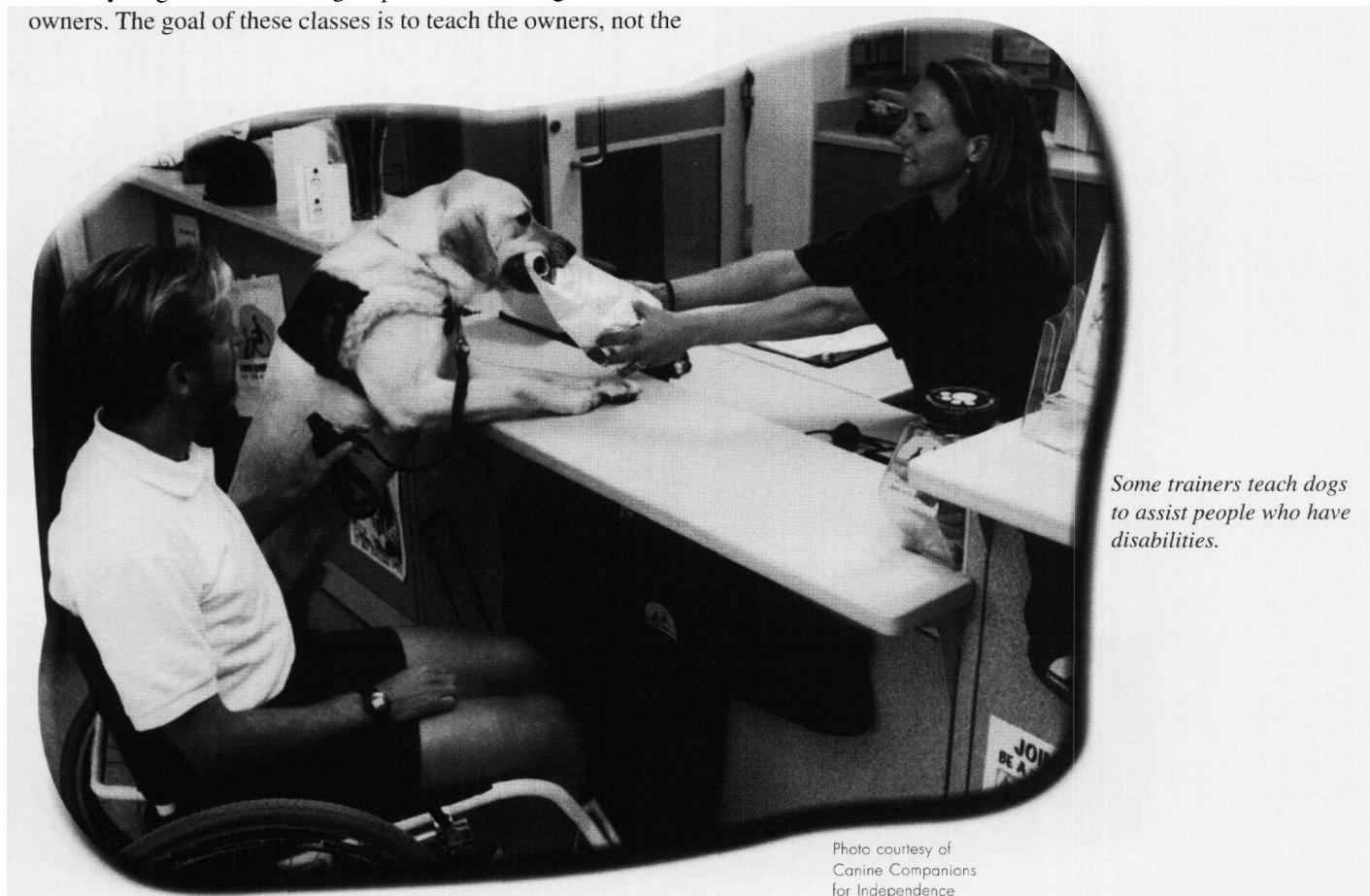
Many dog trainers teach group classes for dogs and their owners. The goal of these classes is to teach the owners, not the

dogs. The trainer explains and demonstrates a training technique and then helps owners to use it.

Some trainers teach dogs to be helpers as well as housemates. Jo Pfaff trains assistance dogs for Canine Companions for Independence in Santa Rosa, California. Her dogs help people who are disabled. Pfaff teaches dogs to turn on lights, open doors, pick up dropped objects—even help people dress or stand.

Like all trainers, assistance dog trainers divide complicated commands into steps. "We build on basic skills," says Pfaff. "We shape them into something better." To teach a dog to flip a light switch, for example, trainers start with the command for "shake." "We train the dog to hit a mark with its paw instead of just putting its paw in someone's hand," says Pfaff. "Gradually, we move the mark to the wall until we hit the light switch." Pfaff uses verbal praise to teach dogs, but she also uses food for fast results.

After 6 months, the people who will use the dogs' services



Some trainers teach dogs to assist people who have disabilities.

Photo courtesy of
Canine Companions
for Independence

come to the training center. They live at the center for 2 weeks while learning how to work with their dogs. During this time, the trainers' role changes. They match owners to dogs by pairing each person's needs and personality with each dog's skill and temperament. "We wouldn't put a shy person with an overbearing dog," says Pfaff. Trainers then explain and demonstrate dog-handling techniques to the new owners, practicing first at the center and progressing to public places, including restaurants, subways, and offices.

Earnings. Animal trainers who were employed by companies and organizations had median earnings of \$23,080 in

1999, according to BLS. The middle 50 percent earned between \$16,890 and \$31,210. The lowest-paid 10 percent earned less than \$13,220. The top-paid 10 percent earned more than \$41,820.

BLS does not have earnings data for dog trainers specifically or for self-employed workers. Industry sources suggest that most full-time, self-employed dog trainers earn between \$25,000 and \$50,000 a year.

Characteristics. Dog trainers need to be patient and resourceful. Instead of becoming frustrated with dogs or owners, they must find new ways of teaching and communicating. And good

Building on simple skills, trainers teach dogs complex tasks—such as, with assistance dogs, retrieving keys.



Photo courtesy of Canine Companions for Independence

trainers are observant, able to read a dog's body language.

Trainers also need to be physically fit to run and walk with dogs, but they do not need herculean power. "Training is about technique," says Giella, "not strength."

Good interpersonal skills are also important, especially when trainers are teaching dog owners. Many trainers can hone interpersonal and public speaking skills on the job.

Preparation. Nearly all pet dog trainers get their start by training their own dogs or joining animal-care groups such as

Dog trainers need to be patient and resourceful.

4-H. To gain professional skills, dog trainers attend workshops presented by expert trainers and animal behaviorists. Dog trainers usually attend at least 24 seminars before training professionally.

Some trainers take courses in animal learning and behavior at colleges and universities. This gives them a thorough understanding of the theories behind dog training. Trainers also can learn by reading books and watching videotapes. But before they can instruct professionally, they need hands-on experience.

Many prospective trainers complete a formal program of study at a training school. Students need to be careful when choosing a school. There are no formal standards or accreditation systems in pet training, so it can be difficult to judge a school's quality. Veterinarians, animal shelters, humane societies, dog owners' clubs, and dog trainer associations often can recommend good courses.

Apprenticing with an experienced trainer is another good way to learn. But again, students must be cautious. "Many people set themselves up as teachers, but they don't know effective and humane technique," says Margolis. "Check credentials and methods."

Finally, some trainers prepare on the job. They learn to train after being hired by a training company, pet store, or pet-supply store. New employees take company-provided classes for several weeks or months. Then, they start as assistant trainers before working independently.

Preparation for assistance dog trainers usually involves completion of education programs at the organizations in which they will work. Most assistance dog training organizations offer

their own preparation so that dog trainers learn their methods.

Entry-level positions at assistance dog organizations are highly competitive. Applicants most likely to be hired have excellent communication skills, experience with animals, and experience helping people with disabilities. "I look for people who love dogs," says Pfaff. "But working well with people is even more important." Nonetheless, she says that training pets and raising puppies for an assistance dog organization are good ways to prepare.

More information. The following organizations have more information about professional dog trainers:

American Kennel Club
5580 Centerview Dr.
Raleigh, NC 27606-3390
(919) 233-9767
<http://www aka org>

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
424 East 92nd St.
New York, NY 10128
(212) 876-7700
<http://www aspca org>

Association of Pet Dog Trainers
17000 Commerce Parkway, Suite C
Mount Laurel, NJ 08054
1 (800) PET-DOGS (738-3647)
<http://www apdt com>

Canine Companions for Independence
PO Box 446
Santa Rosa, CA 95402-0446
(707) 577-1700
<http://www caninecompanions org>

Delta Society
289 Perimeter Rd. East
Renton, WA 98055-1329
(425) 226-7357
<http://www deltasociety org>

National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors
PO Box 369
729 Grapevine Hwy., Suite 369
Hurst, TX 76054-2085
<http://www nadoi org>

Seeing Eye, Inc.
PO Box 375
Morristown, NJ 07963-0375
(973) 539-4425
<http://www.seeingeye.org>

Sports enthusiast to river guide

Bettina George used to paddle boats on the weekends and teach elementary school on the weekdays. But after taking boating classes in the summers, she made boating her full-time job. Today, she teaches kayaking and guides rafts for the Nantahala Outdoor Center in Mountain Rest, South Carolina.

River guides lead groups of boaters down rivers. They choose a safe route down the water and teach their passengers how to paddle. River guides make paddling rivers look easy, but it can be a challenge. Guides must read the water, looking for frothy eddies, rocks that affect currents, and moving debris.

Guides' work starts before boaters arrive. Each morning, they pack supplies and boats and load the vans that will take them to the river. They observe weather conditions and water levels to decide which trips will go forward. Most guides paddle rivers that have already been scouted, but they still need to check their routes for hazards.

When boaters arrive, guides teach them basic strokes. In rafts, passengers learn how and when to move from one side of the raft to the other, shifting its weight to maintain balance. After everyone dons a life jacket, the trip begins.

Whitewater trips are the most exciting for guides. But they also require the most care. As George says, "Lots of people fall

A river guide's workday begins with preparations before boaters arrive.

out of the raft." When that happens, guides fish them out by their lifejackets or throw them a rope.

During any kind of trip, guides have to be alert for changing river conditions. "On long trips, there's no turning back when there's trouble," says Vitchai Cain, a guide formerly with Big Bend River in Terlingua, Texas. "You have to deal with whatever happens." That could mean contending with medical emergencies or unruly passengers.





Photo courtesy of Nantahala Outdoor Center

In addition to navigating rivers, guides entertain their passengers. They explain the history of the area and point out animals and plants that live along the river route.

Many guides, including Cain, lead trips that include overnight stops. As dusk falls, Cain guides the boats to a campsite and sets up camp for the night. While the passengers relax, he and his fellow guide start cooking dinner. "People are amazed

Most guides paddle rivers that have already been scouted, but they still need to check their routes for hazards.

at what we can make out there," says Cain. His specialties include lasagna, enchiladas, and chocolate cake. He makes sure his passengers are happy and having fun around the campfire.

On some trips, learning to paddle is the primary goal. George likes those trips best. She teaches 2-week advanced classes in canoeing and kayaking. Her days begin like any guide's might. She checks and packs supplies and tells her students what the day's schedule will be. Then, she explains and demonstrates boating technique. In advanced classes, she chooses fast-moving rapids for teaching skills such as rolling and stabilizing a kayak. The group eats lunch together on the river and paddles into the recreational center for dinner and a discussion of the video of the day's runs.

Most river guides love their work. "It's a great lifestyle," says George. "You're outside in beautiful country. You meet energetic, fun-loving people. And you can travel to rivers anywhere."

But like nearly any job, guiding has drawbacks. Guides often have to paddle heavy supply rafts or portage—carry boats on land between two waterways or around large obstacles. And conditions can be difficult. "When the weather's bad, you're still out there," Cain says. "Rain, heat—it doesn't matter." But through it all, he's happy with the work. As he describes it, "A bad day on the river is better than a good day anywhere else."

Earnings. BLS does not have earnings data for river guides. Several industry sources suggest that earnings range from minimum wage for beginners to \$25,000 a year for experienced

guides and teachers. But earnings are not always steady; a river guide might earn \$150 a day, for example, but find work for only 3 days a week.

In addition to earnings, some guides receive health and retirement benefits. And most guides enjoy other perks, such as onsite housing, on-the-job training, and boating equipment discounts.

Often, guides' work is seasonal. "I used to guide in summer and work as a ski instructor in the winter," says Gordon Black, American Canoeing Association education director, describing his early years as a guide. "I was a migrant sports worker."

Characteristics. All guides need well-developed paddling skills. Sometimes, boaters with rudimentary skills can start as entertainers aboard rafts while they are improving their boating ability. Guides also need to be calm and clearheaded under pressure.

Strength is another asset for guides, although the best guides substitute technique for brute force. "If you're good," explains Cain, "you don't need to make last-minute corrections. Corrections are what take real strength."

Guides also need to be competent leaders, particularly if they lead whitewater or sea kayaking trips. They should inspire confidence and help passengers understand and follow instructions. Diplomacy and an outgoing personality also are needed to make trips fun, which is especially important for trips involving children or overnight jaunts.

Preparation. Nearly all guides need CPR certification. Most also complete safety training, in Wilderness First Aid or as Wilderness First Responders or Wilderness Emergency Medical Technicians, through one of several commercial schools. This supplemental training teaches them to assess and stabilize injured or sick boaters in areas where doctors are not available. People with standard emergency medical technician or first responder credentials can earn wilderness certification by completing a wilderness transition course.

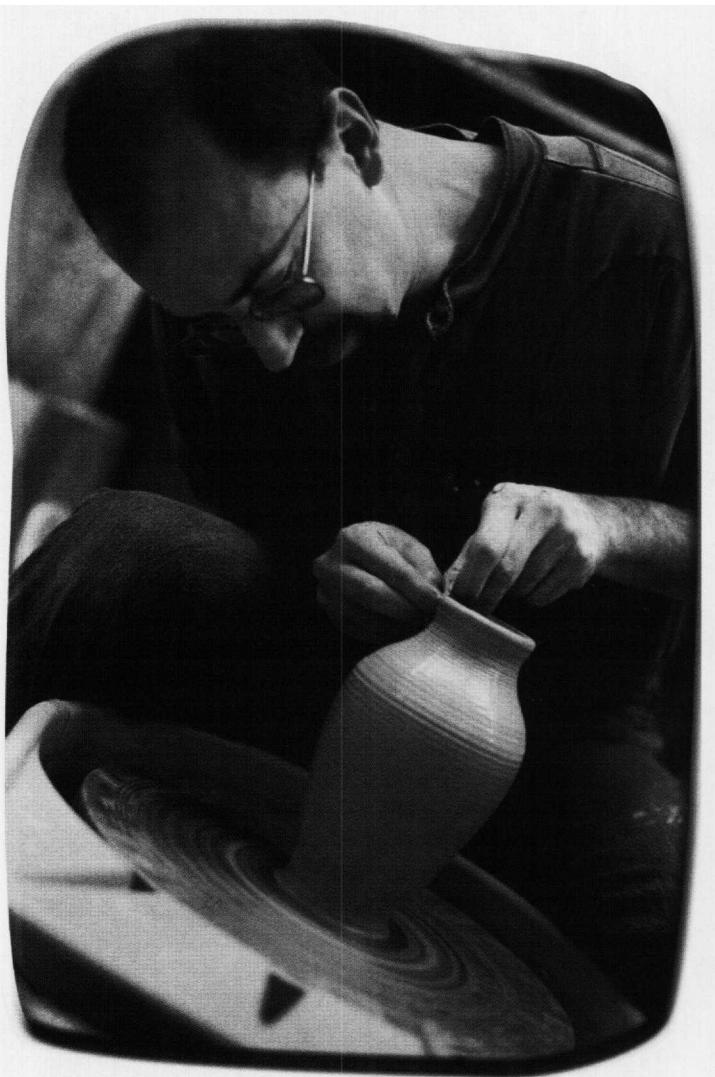
Many guides also need training as swift water rescue technicians. They learn how to swim in whitewater and how to use ropes to rescue boaters from water.

Several States require guides to become licensed before guiding a boat independently. In most of these States, requirements include proof of employment at a licensed rafting company and completion of courses in first aid.

Before they lead trips, all guides complete their rafting companies' training programs. First, they ride in a guided raft. Then, they guide an empty raft down the river. Finally, they assist experienced guides many times before guiding alone. Each river is different, so workers have to train on every river they will guide.

Guides also need to learn the ecology and physical and cultural history of the river they travel. Some learn this on the job. But others have formal education in these subjects. Cain, for instance, has a bachelor's degree in geology—training he says he uses to explain rock formations along the river.

Those who want to teach paddling can earn certification from the American Canoeing Association. The association offers certification for teachers of rafting, canoeing, river kayaking, sea kayaking, and swift water rescue. It also certifies teachers in adaptation techniques for boaters who are disabled. Each certification requires classes at an approved school and a passing score on a certification exam.



Some potters use a potter's wheel to create the pieces they sell.

More information. For more information about professional paddling and certification as a paddling instructor, contact:

American Canoeing Association
7432 Alban Station Blvd., Suite B-232
Springfield, VA 22150
(703) 451-0141
<http://www.acanet.org>

To learn more about licensing requirements for river guides in your State, contact your State government or park service.

Additional information about professional paddling is available in boating magazines such as *Canoe and Kayak*, available at many libraries and online at <http://www.canoe kayak.com>, and *Paddler Magazine*, available at many libraries and online at <http://www.paddlermagazine.com>.

Uncovering career potential

The occupations profiled above are only a few examples of the many hobby-related careers available. Most hobbies can point the way to several different professions. Some people use their expertise in hobby-centered jobs—jobs closely connected to a particular pastime. Other people find ways to use a few of their hobby skills in larger or better-known occupations.

Capitalizing on your sideline

Finding a job centered on a hobby often takes creative thinking, but it can be done. Many jobs use hobbyists' expertise. Here are a few of the common ways in which favorite bailiwicks become wageworthy.

Selling what you do or make. Many people earn money selling their activity or its results. You can do this by working in an established business or by starting your own enterprise. If you start your own business, be ready for entrepreneurial tasks, including accounting, market research, and employee management. And arm yourself for success by writing a business plan describing your target customers, your projected income and expenses, and your startup costs, among other things. You will need to research and follow zoning, income tax, and sales tax laws and register your business with your State and county governments.

Teaching the hobby. Another option is to teach others about the pastime you like. You might teach at a school, either as an elementary, high school, or university instructor, or as an enrichment teacher in a community center or college. Many hobby supply stores also have opportunities for teachers. Music stores and fabric stores, for example, often pay experts to teach customers new skills.

Selling or promoting hobby equipment. Most hobbies require supplies—potting soil, birdseed, guitar picks, and other equipment. Workers sell those supplies and advise customers on which to choose and how to use them. Some companies also hire enthusiasts part time to promote hobby equipment at trade shows and competitions.

Most hobbies can point the way to several different professions.

Repairing hobby equipment. From bicycle shops to violin repair studios, many businesses keep hobby equipment in working order. And being skilled in the hobby is usually a prerequisite for store workers.

Hobby communications. Your expertise could turn into a writing or visual arts career. Many hobbies have trade magazines written for aficionados. These magazines need article writers and editors. Magazines also need photographs and illustrations, which they may buy from stock suppliers. Specialty areas, such as food photography and wildlife illustration, also require skilled artists. Other visual arts opportunities include videography, such as filming people performing a sport.

Hobby organizations. Some hobbyists have associations to promote their activities and share ideas. Workers in these organizations keep membership lists, arrange meetings, coordinate educational programs, and promote the group's ideas. Finding paid jobs in these organizations is difficult because many hobby associations are small or are managed by volunteers. But a few paid jobs exist, and workers who have them are at the forefront of their hobbies' developments.

Connecting pastimes to occupations

Even if you don't have a job centered on a particular hobby, you can still use your interests to find a career. Hobbies provide information about the skills you like using—skills that can be applied to several occupations.

To find an occupation related to your hobby interests, first decide which hobby-related skills you enjoy most. Occupations that use favorite abilities are probably the ones that suit you best. Dental technicians, for example, use sculpting and colorist skills to mold dentures and paint them to look realistic.

Identifying other interests is another important step because most occupations require many different types of skills. Coupling an interest in people with an interest in sports, for



Like those in many occupations, tasks in some crafting specialties require taking precautions—including the use of welding glasses while checking a kiln.

example, could lead to a job as a recreational therapist. Or if you enjoy science as well as pet care, a job as a veterinarian or biologist might agree with you.

Following are several common hobbies and a few of the occupations related to them. To find out how closely the occupations match your interests and what other types of skills are required, consider researching at the library and talking to people already on the job.

Animal care. Occupations focused on hands-on animal care include groomer, kennel assistant, and farmer. For people who enjoy science, veterinarian and veterinarian technician are some other hands-on options. To help animals without giving direct care, your options range widely, from pet-supply store worker to biological scientist. And if you like observing and teaching pets, you might like human-centered occupations—such as psychologist or teacher—that use some similar skills.

Arts and crafts. Many occupations have an artistic element. Some focus on design and drawing, such as industrial designer, desktop publisher, and advertising manager. Others—including

engineer, terrazzo worker, and science technician—use designing and building skills. And for artistic types who like working with people, options include cosmetology, floral design, and art therapy.

Computers. There are many computer-focused occupations, and any one might be a good match for a computer hobbyist. For example, if you like putting together computer systems and choosing the best components and software, consider work as a systems analyst. Solving computer glitches and answering people's computer questions are the realm of help desk technicians and technical writers. Computer engineer and repairer are among the options for hardware tinkerers. And professional programmers, webmasters, computer scientists, or database analysts may have used their problemsolving and logic skills as amateur software makers.

Cooking. For those who like cooking, epicurean employment abounds. Some options include chef, cook, and restaurant manager. But a penchant for combining ingredients also is helpful to food scientists, chemists, and chemical engineers, some of whom design and test food additives. A cooking hobby might signal an additional interest in hospitality. Entertaining guests is central to many workers' jobs, including hotel managers and some public relations workers.

Fixing things. People who like making repairs and tinkering with machines have many occupational options, including automotive repair, electrical work, and plumbing. In a few occupations, such as general maintenance worker, hobby-related repair

To find an occupation connected to
your hobby, decide which hobby-
related skills you enjoy using most.

skills are sometimes the only requirement for a job. Workers in some occupations—engineer and science technician, for example—design machines as well as fix them.

Gardening. Occupations associated with gardening include landscape workers, biologists, and farmers. But these are only a few among many. Combining design skills with botanical ones, landscape architects choose and arrange plants in parks and yards. And an interest in mixing gardening chemicals and checking the soil could lead to a job as a conservation scientist or chemist.

Music. Musically inclined people might contemplate familiarly melodious occupations such as musician, radio announcer, and music teacher. But related careers include music therapist, recreation worker and facilities manager, and musical instrument repairer.

Reading and writing. Reading-centered jobs include those of librarians, editors, and college professors. A love of reading also meshes well with research careers, such as biological and physical scientists and social scientist. And writers have jobs ranging from news reporter to technical writer to public relations specialist; other wordsmiths use their abilities in medical transcription and court reporting.

Sports. Although sports enthusiasts enjoy the physical fitness aspect of their jobs, they also might like focusing on others' physical well-being or on using their strategic skills. Some obvious sports-related choices include dancer, physical therapist, and coach and sports instructor. But consider the physical skills of construction workers and police officers, the coaching tasks of general managers or human resource specialists, and the strategic planning of lawyers, management analysts, and salesworkers.

Theater. Occupations directly related to theater include actor, director, and set designer. But many other occupations use dramatic skill, including radio announcer, teacher, writer, and editor. And business occupations of all sorts—from accountant to financial manager—play a role in making performances a success.

Resources beyond hobbies

Learn more about how your interests relate to careers by visiting a career or guidance counselor. You might take a career interest inventory to see how the activities you like compare with those preferred by workers in different types of jobs. And because interests are only part of choosing a career, counselors also might discuss your other job-related characteristics, including work and volunteer experiences, favorite classes and projects, hopes for future earnings, and educational plans.

Many career guidance books also can help you learn about careers and how they relate to your interests. One source available at many libraries is the 2000-01 *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, also online at <http://www.bls.gov/ocohome.htm>. The *Handbook* includes information about the tasks, earnings, working conditions, education and training requirements, and employment prospects for more than 250 occupations.

The *Occupational Outlook Quarterly* also is available in libraries and online at <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/ooqhome.htm>.

Several *Quarterly* articles address choosing occupations. "Core subjects and your career," in the summer 1999 issue, lists occupations associated with high, middle, and basic levels of math, English, and science skills. This can help you match favorite school subjects with careers. And "Matching Yourself With the

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World of Work, 1998," in the fall 1998 issue, categorizes occupations by working conditions, such as working indoors or outdoors; skills used, such as math, creativity, and physical strength; and earnings.

If you are a college student interested in pursuing a hobby business, find out whether the college or university you attend has an Association of Collegiate Entrepreneurs chapter on campus. This international organization comprises student entrepreneurs, community entrepreneurs, and sponsoring firms. Its aim is to encourage student entrepreneurs through activities and resources such as networking opportunities, mentoring arrangements, and education and research programs.

The U.S. Small Business Administration publishes information about starting a business. Small Business Development Centers throughout the country offer training for owners of small businesses, and associations affiliated with the Small Business Administration provide free business counseling and mentoring. To request information, call 1 (800) 827-5722 or visit the Small Business Administration online, <http://www.sba.gov>.

For access to specialists, resources, and other information, including current news about legislative matters affecting self-employment, contact:

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1 (800) 232-NASE (232-6273)
<http://www.nase.org>

