

By Molly Dickinson

# Find Your Passion.

**W**e developed our “Passions & Pursuits” section because we knew *TCL*’s readers are some of the most passionate people on the planet—not just when it comes to chiropractic, but when it comes to living and loving life. This issue, we wanted to honor that knack for lifting everything from one’s practice to one’s personal hobbies to its highest potential by expanding our “Passions & Pursuits” pages. Read on to find out what makes these sources of personal joy and challenge such central elements of a vitalistic and chiropractic lifestyle. Still struggling to find a pastime or interest that speaks to you? Our inspirational profiles and expert advice will help you dig in, discover your





Dr. Perry Rush has a deep connection to earthly pursuits—panning for gold, gardening, fishing and his latest hobby, chainsaw carving.

bliss and pursue it to the fullest. Or you can simply sit back, relax and join us in celebrating the chiropractic community's passion for passions.

## MORE THAN JUST A HOBBY

From scrapbooking to rock climbing, there is some serious science behind our hobbies. According to a 2007 article in the *New York Times*, immersing yourself in an enjoyable avocation on a regular basis increases levels of brain neurotransmitters like dopamine, norepinephrine and endorphins—chemicals that energize, sharpen focus and incite pleasure—effects that can extend well beyond the activity itself. In fact, experts say “losing yourself” in an activity in this way stimulates overall creativity, motivation and self-confidence, and can even make you more productive and happier in work and family situations.

That supreme feeling of “losing yourself” is known in psychological circles as “flow,” a phenomenon described by positive psycholo-

gist Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi in the 1990s as an experience of total, invigorating focus, full involvement and fluid accomplishment as a result of one's complete immersion in the process of a task. “Flow states” (so named because research subjects found the experience akin to being swept joyously long by an inner current) are often characterized by a feeling that time is flying by and that one's body and brain are running on an exhilarating, intuitive “automatic” that results in the total dissipation of self-consciousness and a sense of overwhelming success. It is a truly delicious sense of intrinsic energy and pure expression, one that is a direct engagement and articulation of our purest selves. In vitalistic terms, it's the equivalent of turning the keys over to your innate and enjoying the glorious ride.

## PASSION ICONS

For some people, turning hobbies into bonafide, innate-expressing passions seems to have be-

come a passion unto itself. Get inspired to follow (or should we say “flow?”) your bliss after reading up on these standouts.

## Perry Rush, D.C.

Since graduating from Sherman College of Straight Chiropractic in 1976, Rush has racked up an impressive and diverse string of hobbies—each one seeming to loop into the next. “[My hobbies] really came from the need to have something else,” Rush says. “I teach full time, I have a part-time practice, I needed some outlet.” Rush ended up with close to a dozen outlets. Come summer, his longtime passion for gardening will have his South Carolina property bursting with everything from watermelons and persimmons to “weird and strange” plants like Mother of Thousands, a gift from a friend who shares another of Rush's passions—exploring his home state's Edisto Island. Rush's yearly treks to camp, kayak, gig flounder, net shrimp, crab, clam and hunt for fossils and artifacts (jam-

packed trips he says leave him “almost totally exhausted physically but renewed mentally and emotionally”) are funded by another of Rush’s hobbies—chainsaw bear carving. While jogging (yet another pastime), Rush became intrigued by chainsaw carvings of bears he passed on one of his routes and soon adopted the hobby. He even renamed his carving-strewn practice “Bear Country Chiropractic.” The common thread among Rush’s sundry pursuits, from biking to gold panning, is a marked passion for the great outdoors. “I have to get my tie off,” Rush says. “I have to get dirty!”

## Leah Urben, D.C.

A 1991 Life University graduate and owner of Wellspring Chiropractic Clinic in Marietta, Ga., Urben’s various pastimes have always revolved around a notion of community. The lifelong horse lover and founder of Saddle Up Cobb (a county-wide equestrian club), former Atlanta Lawn and Tennis Association (ALTA) team captain and current outreach director for the Kennesaw Mountain Trail Club, calls herself “a real organizer-group person.” When she discovers a passion for something, she just has to share. Urben, whose early love of “playing horsey” grew to encompass a lifetime of horsemanship and the creation of the saddle club in 1999, wasn’t surprised when the paths of her oldest hobby led to her most recent passion. “To stay energized, you need a balance in life between work, family and the spiritual,” she says. “For me, the horses and the trail club [Urben served as a founding member in 2003] are both kind of spiritual things involving nature.” Her love of trail riding, nature and Civil War history combined with her talent for organizing and Saddle Up Cobb’s vested interest in helping to maintain the county’s only equestrian-friendly public trails—located near the site of a famed Civil War battle at Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park—led her to pursue her current role as outreach director. Urben’s latest project, Trail Ambassadors, will develop a corps of volunteers to direct, guide and educate hikers along the trail. Considering Urben’s gift for integrating her passions and spreading them to others, one can’t help but wonder if a horseback version of the program is not far off.

## FINDING AND LIVING YOUR PASSION

Each of us harbors multiple channels through which we can tap into our own inspired inner currents. If you haven’t found yours yet, our experts’ advice is to keep digging until you hit

water. Because once you do, the surge of positivity, self-expression and personal satisfaction has the potential to flow into and nourish every aspect of your life.

According to Jane A. Coddington, Ph.D., an organizational consultant and executive coach who studies the psychology of thriving in adults, when it comes to discovering your passion, “The most important thing is to recognize what really interests you at a high level—when you do the activity, time seems to stop and the experience of flow occurs.” Many people find if they simply open themselves



Dr. Leah Urben is pictured doing what she loves best—riding horses and maintaining trails.



to experiences and practice self-awareness, that their passions discover them. However, if this more passive approach to finding your passions isn’t enough, Coddington recommends actively consulting your memory and asking introspective questions to help double your discovery efforts. “Sometimes it is helpful to remember the types of play and games that were the most fun in childhood. How are you adventurous? How are you not? Do you enjoy strenuous activity or quieter activity? Alone or with others? In a large group or small group? Answering questions like these helps people get in touch with themselves, and then select activities or hobbies that are in

alignment with the self and where passion is likely to occur.”

Pascale Brady, a certified life coach out of Gaithersburg, Md., suggests another tool: “In positive psychology,” she says, “one way to find your core authentic self is to take the VIA [Institute on Character] strengths survey online [viasurvey.org], which will give you, in order of importance for you, your 24 strengths.” Your top five strengths can serve as a divining rod, pointing you toward avocations or areas within your work, family or spiritual life where passion is likely hiding just below the surface.

Both Brady and Coddington stress that the pure expression of your innate self needn’t be limited to a favorite hobby. Passion can—and, truly, should—be something we fully experience in all areas of our lives. So, however and wherever you have an opportunity to tap into your truest self, do it, embrace it—or, in other words—just go with the flow. **TCL**